THE NATURE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE EARLY YEARS, KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 2, IN TASMANIAN SCHOOLS

Margot J. Boardman

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DECLARATION

I certify that this Thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of another degree or diploma in any institute, college or university, and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the Thesis.

Margot J. Boardman

ABSTRACT

THE NATURE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE EARLY YEARS, KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 2, IN TASMANIAN SCHOOLS

By Margot Boardman

Leadership is of critical importance in all facets of successful education. The early childhood sector is no exception. Recent devolution of decision-making from the central authority to individual school-based management has resulted in significant changes in leadership provision in Kindergarten to Grade 2 (K-2) education. Leadership has become more generically conceived, resulting in many substantive leadership positions in K-2 education being filled by individuals who possess qualifications other than those related to early childhood education.

Investigating the nature and effects of this changing K-2 leadership is the focus of this study. Through questionnaires specifically designed for the study, it sought to investigate K-2 leaders' (N=40 principals and early childhood senior staff) and teachers' (N=101) perceptions regarding the nature of, and challenges for, leadership in K-2 education, from a stratified sample of 30 schools from two Tasmanian districts. Comparisons were also undertaken based on gender, position classification, area of specialisation, school type, and level of qualifications.

Analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data revealed that both leaders and teachers believed that the three most important issues for K-2 leadership were demonstration of trust and support, commitment to improvement of teaching practices, and possession of high level skills in communication and interpersonal relationships. Leaders and teachers agreed that managing time available to satisfy both teaching and leadership commitments was a key challenge for today's K-2

leader. Both teachers and leaders identified teams of teachers as providers of strong leadership influence. However, leaders' and teachers' views also differed. For example, teachers indicated that access to, and presence of, the principal in K-2 classrooms was a high leadership priority, whereas leaders strongly supported the use of shared leadership and collaborative processes within their leadership. Teachers also viewed the role of the leaders in much broader terms than the leaders themselves.

Female leaders believed that they were energetic, had better relations with school personnel, and had a greater knowledge of K-2 education than did male leaders. Leaders in primary schools indicated that they believed they demonstrated greater respect for, and higher interpersonal skills with, K-2 teachers than did leaders in district high schools. Teachers confirmed this view. Leaders who had an early childhood specialisation were perceived by teachers to make more credible decisions and to have demonstrated greater levels of expertise and competence in relation to the technical core of K-2 education than those without this specialisation. Teachers with lower levels of qualifications perceived their leaders to be more collaborative and accessible than those colleagues who were more qualified.

The implications of these, and other findings are detailed, and recommendations for further action are made. Implications include the need for:

- professional development opportunities to increase leaders' expertise in communication and interpersonal relationships, and teachers' knowledge of, and skills in, educational leadership practices;
- deciding where K-2 expertise is available both within and outside the school, especially in district high and small primary schools;
- leaders to resolve the dilemmas between central office demands that take them out of the school and the teachers' demands for them to have a

presence in the school and be accessible, as well as fulfilling teaching and leadership responsibilities;

- greater celebration of achievements in the performance of leaders and K-2 teachers; and
- leaders to convince more K-2 teachers of the essential importance of professional learning communities involving shared leadership processes.

Whilst the major importance of the study lies in its addition to the relatively small body of published knowledge concerning leadership in early childhood education, the results and implications suggest the need for further study in the area. Recommendations for further study include:

- the implications for leadership of the major change expected with the K-2 teaching force becoming younger and more highly qualified;
- the need for wider use of the questionnaires developed for the study to other districts in Tasmania and other states in Australia, with a greater number of male K-2 teachers and as a basis of data gathering for school-based professional development activities; and
- the need for a longitudinal, qualitative, in-depth case study of K-2 leaders and teachers in one school.

To my Mick, for his love, dedication and

constant belief in the success of my studies.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is acknowledged as being of critical importance in successful schools (Fullan, 1991; Sergiovanni, 1996), and, likewise, it is regarded as an important issue for early childhood education (Rodd, 1998). Over the past decade, Tasmanian schools have undergone substantial changes, as responsibility for decision-making has devolved from the central education authority to a model involving individual, school-based management (Mulford, Hogan, & Lamb, 1997). This has meant that significant changes have occurred in relation to the leadership provision in the Kindergarten to Grade 2 (K-2) area of schools. Early childhood leadership has moved from being acknowledged as a specialised role to become a more generically conceived role.

The impact of these changes has not been fully investigated, with minimal research having been conducted in this area in Australia during the last twenty years (Rodd, 1998). This study is designed to add to this field of research, by investigating the nature of the leadership role as perceived by school leaders and K-2 teachers within selected Tasmanian schools. This chapter will present background information, as well as defining the purposes and related significance of the study. The research question and sub-questions will be presented, together with the assumptions and limitations involved.

Background to the Study

In the Tasmanian system, over a number of years, there have been significant changes in early childhood education. Many early childhood teachers no longer hold

specialisations in K-2 education, often being primary or secondary trained. Likewise, it is no longer necessary for K-2 leaders to hold a specialisation in early childhood education. The impact of these practices is unknown, but questions have to be asked about the quality and appropriateness of the educational provision currently being offered to Tasmanian K-2 students, when leaders and teachers have no formal training in early childhood education.

A further problem, associated with the rapid changes occurring in K-2 education, relates to the lack of specific professional development for leaders in K-2 education. In Tasmania, the central leadership body for early childhood leaders (Tasmanian Early Childhood Senior Staff Association) has, over the past decade, been gradually dismantled, leaving a void in leadership development opportunities for K-2 leaders. Leaders no longer have a forum providing them with the ability to come together to share and discuss new initiatives and the implications which these have on early childhood leadership and on the education of young children.

Available research (Vander Ven, 1991; Rodd, 1998) points to the fact that early childhood leaders fail to feel comfortable in supervising adults and dealing with managerial issues, within their leadership responsibilities. It is therefore important to investigate what implications, if any, this has on the leadership competence demonstrated by K-2 leaders in Tasmanian schools. If leaders fail to demonstrate competence in their leadership they will find it difficult to achieve credibility and status within the community associated with early childhood education (Rodd, 1998). Being protectors of quality in provision of K-2 education must be the key role for early childhood leaders.

Another issue of importance relates to the leaders' and teachers' gender. Many school principals in Tasmanian schools are males with the majority of K-2 teachers being females. Little is known regarding the impact, which this gender difference has on the nature of leadership provided. Furthermore, the relevance of current research and practice is unknown, given that early childhood leaders are leading groups made up almost entirely of female teachers (Rodd, 1998). Conversely, when considering the gender of K-2 teachers' most contacted leaders, it is known that the majority of these are females (Rodd, 1998) and once again the impact of this gender similarity is little understood.

Many aspects of leadership for early childhood education require further investigation. These aspects include the implications of gender differences and similarities between teachers and leaders, the impact of leaders not holding a specialisation in early childhood and the lack of opportunities for professional development and collegial endeavours for K-2 leaders. These issues are the foundation stones for this study.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the manner in which K-2 leaders' and teachers' perceptions concur and differ, regarding the leadership provision for early childhood education. The study set out to achieve the following aims:

- identify similarities and differences between school principals' and K-2 teachers' perceptions of the leadership role in early childhood education.
- identify similarities and differences between K-2 teachers' and their most contacted leaders' perceptions of the leadership role in early childhood education.

- investigate the impact which leaders' and teachers' gender, specialisation and level of qualifications have on their perceptions of K-2 leadership.
- identify the key challenges for K-2 education today, as perceived by early childhood leaders and teachers.

Significance of the Study

The main significance of this study lies in its potential to add to the relatively small body of knowledge about the leadership provision in early childhood education, not only here in Tasmania but in wider K-2 education sectors. In many ways, Tasmania is unique within the Australian early childhood settings as Kindergartens are usually physically situated within the grounds of the school, rather than on separate sites as occurs in many other states of Australia. Therefore, the information gained from this study has the potential to enhance the body of knowledge concerning the nature of early childhood leadership as it pertains to the leadership provision in single-site schools.

Further information regarding the nature of the leadership role in early childhood settings is important. It is no longer appropriate to adhere to the practices of yesteryear. The 'elusive phenomenon' (Rodd 1998, p.25) of the nature of leadership in early childhood education needs to be addressed, to allow K-2 leaders to clearly understand what is required to enhance their future leadership performance. This should enable them to be responsive to the social and cultural pressures experienced by children living in an Australian family and attending an Australian school. This study is only a start. Nevertheless, it has the potential to add some important insights, developing a clearer understanding of what is appropriate leadership for K-2 children in our schools today.

The other point of significance relates to the study's potential to inform the educational authorities in Tasmania about the current state of leadership for early childhood education in this state. Responses should be forthcoming to important questions such as:

- Is the practice of appointing leaders, who have no expertise in early childhood education, to senior positions of leadership in K-2 education, appropriate?
- Are K-2 leaders' and teachers' perceptions of the nature of leadership for early childhood similar or different, and what impact do these findings in respect of early childhood education in Tasmanian schools?

Given that the Department of Education is currently undertaking a review of early childhood education in Tasmania these findings may provide further data to facilitate the understanding of the present situation in early childhood education.

Research Questions for the Study

One key research question was used to guide this study. It was as follows:

- In what ways do present school leaders' and Kindergarten to Grade 2 teachers' perceptions concur and differ, regarding leadership in early childhood education, and in turn, what perceived challenges do Kindergarten to Grade 2 school leaders and teachers see as key issues for K-2 education, in Tasmanian schools today?

Subsequently, this key question was broken down into seven sub-questions to enable thoughtful consideration to be given to various aspects related to the study. The sub-questions were as follows:

- What are school leaders' perceptions of the nature of leadership in relation to K-2 education, in their schools?
- What are K-2 teachers' perceptions of the nature of leadership in relation to K-2 education, in their schools?
- What similarities and differences are evident between school leaders' and K-2 teachers' perceptions of the leadership role for early childhood education?
- What perceived impact does the leaders' level of specialisation, level of qualifications and gender have on their leadership in K-2?
- What perceived impact does the teachers' level of specialisation, level of qualifications and gender have on their perceptions K-2 leadership?
- What perceived impact does the lack of early childhood training have on how leaders fulfil their leadership role in K-2 education?
- What are the key challenges for K-2 education today, as perceived by school leaders and teachers?

Limitations of the Study

This study was conducted in two Tasmanian state school districts. Ideally, a wider sample from all school districts would have lent greater validity to any generalisations made, related to the entire Tasmanian primary school population. However, this was not possible given the amount of time available to the researcher. Nevertheless, to maximise validity, every attempt was made to use a representative sample.

Definition of Terms

AP	Assistant Principal
AST	Advanced Skills Teacher
B Ed	Bachelor of Education degree
ECE	Early Childhood Education
Flying Start	A literacy, mathematics and social skills program for children in Prep to Grade 2
K-2	Kindergarten to Grade 2
M Ed	Master of Education degree
PE	Physical Education specialisation
TTC	Tasmanian Teachers' Certificate

Summary

The phenomenon of leadership in early childhood education has long been considered as somewhat of an enigma (Rodd, 1998, citing Wallace, & Wildy, 1995). Furthermore, leadership in early childhood education has only been the focus of limited research. This study was designed to provide a deeper understanding of the role which Tasmanian early childhood leaders play in the provision of quality educational programs for K-2 children. Utilising the views of current Tasmanian K-2 leaders and teachers the nature of K-2 leadership was investigated, regarding to the role that school principals and teachers' most contacted leaders undertake in providing leadership in early childhood education.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 2 reviews current literature pertaining to school leadership followed by an in-depth summation related to leadership in early childhood settings. The third chapter deals with the methods and procedures utilised within the study. Chapter 4 presents the results obtained, whilst Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the study's findings. Finally, conclusions from, and implications of, the study are presented in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Over the past decade, Tasmanian schools have undergone extensive changes as devolution of responsibility towards school-based management "has shifted power and authority from Central office (to) individual schools" (Mulford, Hogan, & Lamb 1997, p. 27). This has had a significant impact upon the leadership roles and responsibilities of principals and senior staff in Tasmanian schools. This chapter attempts to capture the essence of quality leadership provision, utilising some of the latest findings from leading writers and researchers.

Subsequently, the role of leadership in the early childhood area of education is explored. Issues related to the specific nature of leadership in early childhood settings are addressed and key findings summarised. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the inherent implications, for Tasmanian schools, associated with the findings on the provision of quality leadership in early childhood areas.

Research Findings on Recent Leadership Roles in Schools

Over the past two decades, researchers and writers (Hallinger & Heck, 1996) have provided many models and conceptualisations of school leadership. "Predominant notions of the principal's role have evolved from manager, ... to change agent, to instructional manager, to instructional leader" (Hallinger & Heck 1996, p. 738), and more recently to transactional and transformational perspectives of leadership. Each of these approaches has made important contributions towards

understanding the leadership role in schools. For the purposes of this study, the instructional, transactional and transformational forms of leadership are briefly explored to ascertain the central components of each.

The first approach to be discussed is that of instructional leadership. Stoll and Fink (1996) refer to the research by Smith and Andrew (1989) which conceptualises school leaders in an instructional role, characterised by the four sets of competencies comprising "resource provider, ... instructional resource, ... communicator and a visible presence" within the school (1996, p. 105). Hallinger and Heck (1996) refer to studies by Bamburg and Andrews (1990) and Goldring and Pasternak (1994) who employed a goal-oriented form of leadership to attain improved student outcomes.

The second form of leadership, a transactional mode, differs from an instructional approach. It focuses on school structure management, with its main efforts being directed towards "developing plans, ensuring task completion, facilitating information flow and working well with the various school groups, particularly teachers" (Stoll & Fink 1996, p. 105). However, as Stoll and Fink (1996) point out, the complex changes being encountered daily by schools, such as self-management at the school site, increased procedural accountability and greater parent participation in education, have caused considerable tension, confusion and instability in schools. The focus on control in transactional leadership is no longer appropriate, and Stoll and Fink (1996) assert that the complex changes being experienced in schools today require *commitment* to joint school endeavours, not *control* via leadership.

During these unstable and demanding times in schools, a third, transformational, approach to leadership has been seen as a means of leading schools through complex changes and challenges. Leadership in a transformational mode is characterised as people-oriented, where school leaders build relationships and commitment to shared

visions with members of the school community. Participation in school decision-making and implementation processes is collaboratively based, with successful achievement of set goals energising the school community via transformational leadership (Stoll & Fink, 1996).

The five skills sets of transformational leadership proposed by Anderson (1998) are self-management, interpersonal communication, counselling and problem management, consultative skills and versatility skills. He contends that the principal's highly developed skills in self-management have the potential to inspire others through the principal being a positive role model, leading to a more effective learning organisation (Anderson). The principal's interpersonal skills, demonstrated in an ability to successfully work, listen and interact with school personnel, have the potential to raise the principal's credibility within the school community. This interpersonal approach is founded upon valuing of self and others by the principal (Anderson). The third set of skills proposed by Anderson involves counselling and problem management. Key skills in this set include the ability to coach, to help, to problem-solve, to work with others and attend to any arising issues (Anderson). However, success will only be achieved when the principal trusts others. The principal's skills in consultative practices include direction-giving, leading, planning and evaluation, which need to be utilised in a team-based, insightful, honest, confident manner (Anderson). The final group of leadership skills proposed by Anderson , those of versatility, are displayed in the leader's ability to bring about effective change within the school organisation. Anderson gives empathy, tolerance, flexibility, and openness to change as key attributes of leadership. Leadership of today's schools in a transforming mode, is "vision, planning, communication and creative action that has a

positive unifying effect on a group of people around a set of clear values and beliefs, to accomplish a clear set of measurable goals" asserts Anderson (1998, p. 270).

Leithwood, Tomlinson, and Genge (1996) state that, from their research, they have identified dimensions of transformational leadership. These aspects include charisma, inspiration and vision; goal consensus; individual consideration; intellectual stimulation; modelling; high performance expectations; culture building, and contingent reward (Leithwood et al., 1996). However, Stoll and Fink suggest that the reality of schools today is that leaders still have to attend to all the "interpersonal and political models of leadership described previously" (1996, p. 107). Furthermore, they contend that this requires a leadership model which synthesises existing leadership models, whilst providing "sufficient scope to encourage the imagination, creativity and intuition of school leaders" (Stoll & Fink 1996, p. 108). These writers go on to view school leadership from an invitational perspective, where shared visions by school personnel lead to enhanced educational experiences for students. This leadership approach is founded on four premises: trust, optimism, respect and intentional support, care and encouragement.

Research by Stoll and Fink (1996) found that successful school leaders changed roles many times each day, from manager to facilitator, change agent and counsellor depending on the situational setting. However, it was also seen that these school leaders always operated from "an invitational stance of optimism, respect, trust and intentionality" report Stoll and Fink (1996, p. 110). In fact, they contend that the successful school leaders in their study employed many instructional and transformational leadership strategies "but did so in ways which united colleagues in the pursuit of higher goals for themselves and their pupils" (p. 110). Leadership in an invitational mode requires teachers being treated as professionals who are trusted to

make quality decisions for students' enhanced achievement. Collaboration and continuous improvement are key tenets of this leadership approach.

Thus it can be seen that there has been, and still is, considerable debate over the notion of school leadership. Leithwood and Duke (1999, p. 67) observe that, owing to the complexity of the leadership role, theorists have experienced difficulties "developing a widely agreed-upon understanding of leadership". However, one thing is clearly evident and that is that the school leader plays a critical role in the quality of educational provision being offered within the school (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Leithwood et al., 1996).

Research Findings on Current Expert Leadership Practices

The quality of leadership practices are a crucial aspect of successful schools and investigation of the actual roles and actions undertaken during the day-to-day operation of the school by school leaders needs further investigation.

School-based management, with devolution of responsibility to schools and their communities, has created the need for immense leadership changes in schools today. School leaders are "facing more role changes than any other group involved in school reform" assert Blase and Blase (1997, p. 30). Further, they claim that school leadership now involves "leading from the center, enabling and supporting teacher success, managing reform and extending the school community" (Blase & Blase 1997, p. 30). These substantial role changes have a significant impact upon all school members, especially other senior staff members, as the press towards leadership change intensifies.

One key aspect of this change in leadership involves the encouragement of other teaching members to assume central leadership roles within the school's operation, encompassing risk taking and experimentation by school leaders. This also necessitates senior staff leaders adopting a facilitative role, where they work alongside others to achieve shared goals, through the provision of planning time, resources, professional literature and information for decision making (Blase & Blase 1997, p. 35).

Goldring and Rallis (1993) support this leadership approach and state that, in the facilitative role, school leaders take a motivating and coordinating stance, allowing school staff members to perform to their highest potential. This may include "manipulating time, space, resources and personnel which subsequently enables others to act and legitimizes their actions" (Goldring & Rallis 1993, pp. 135-136). This role is closely linked to that of a balancer, where leaders need to balance "autonomy for the school with influence and control from the system hierarchy" (Goldring & Rallis 1993, p. 137). They go on to add that, as balancers, school leaders need to build relationships with their superiors within the system as well as with other members of their school team as part of the focus of shared, participative leadership.

Mulford, Hogan, and Lamb investigated this participative notion of school leadership in Tasmania and observe that school leaders need to engage in "consensus building, meaningful collaboration and shared leadership" (Mulford et al. 1997, p. 27) in actualising the school vision. This requires "collegiality and a constructively critical, professional learning community" comment Mulford et al. (1997, p. 27). This is an argument for empowerment in action and would seem to be the key to successful shared leadership.

The aspect of empowerment is explored in a study by Bishop and Mulford (1996). This research related to interactions that were perceived as empowering by principals and teachers in four Victorian primary schools. The findings of this study demonstrate that the aspects of "recognition, support, respect and reliability were the main factors found to be influential in the teachers' and principals' thoughts and behaviours, regarding empowerment" (Bishop & Mulford 1996, p. 199). However, the key aspect of trust, between all school members and the system, was found to underpin those four factors.

A similar view is taken by Beck and Murphy (1993), and they state that school leadership in the 1990s needs to encompass empowerment and support of others in educational endeavour. This empowerment entails acknowledgment of the changing social context in which schools have to operate and addressing the problems facing students who are at-risk owing to low socio-economic, religious, racial or disability factors. Beck and Murphy (1993, p. 192) note that this role is about "redesigning the purposes and structures of (school) institutions to better service our changing student population". Beck and Murphy (1993, pp. 193-194) contend that this role is closely "intertwined with critical ethical issues", related to addressing values in education and the moral dimensions of schooling. This requires school leaders to be caring, nurturing individuals within the school community. They need to "view teachers, students, parents and others as colleagues, partners, co-learners and friends" (Beck & Murphy 1995, p. 195).

Lashway, Mazzarella, and Grundy (1996) support this personal and social view of the school leader's role. They comment that school leadership is a highly complex role and assert that effective school leaders are

competent, both intellectually and socially. They have a high degree of energy and initiative, but have learned the value of patience. Furthermore, their relationships with others are sound and they communicate their beliefs and values skilfully, and they are psychologically well-balanced, integrating their diverse traits into a smoothly functioning whole

(Lashway et al. 1996, p. 37).

The leadership role is further elaborated by Goldring and Rallis who defined another aspect as an inquiring role where "collaborative problem solving and shared decision making" (1993, p. 139) are of paramount importance to the school's effective operation. This inquiring role demands that the leader be a learner based on reflection and who "inspires other members of the school to be reflective practitioners" (Goldring & Rallis 1993, p. 139). Beck and Murphy (1993, pp 193-194) concur with this view and contend that success in leadership requires a school leader to be well-educated and the "head learner" in the school. Louis and Murphy (1994) take a slightly wider view of the leader as a central learner, and contend that the principal needs to provide intellectual leadership for the school, which entails incorporating the thinking and writing of others, such as researchers and practitioners in similar circumstances, into the school's restructuring process.

Further, Leithwood, Begley et al. believe that this need for technical knowledge by school leaders is essential and describe it as needing to be "intimate, long term, continually evolving" knowledge (1994, p. 74). However, Leithwood, Begley, et al. (1994, p. 75) continue that "the 'potential' of the leader's knowledge is likely to be very disappointing in the face of poor-quality communication and unproductive

interpersonal relations among members of the school". Leithwood, Begley, et al. state that a school leader must demonstrate and promote "the central importance of precise and defensive knowledge about the school's main business of teaching" (1994, p. 73). This requires the possession of effective communication skills, a factor of critical importance for a successful school leader. A leader's capability to empower others to group problem-solve in attending to pressing educational issues, which arise in day to day operation of a school, is an important component in this promotion of the knowledge of teaching and learning.

Hallinger and Hausman (1994, p. 168) also refer to this group problem solving mode of leadership and operation, and they state that school leaders need to engage the entire school community in "problem finding and problem solving" as part of the initiation and implementation of educational change. They comment that leadership style is increasingly being referred to as "transformational" with the leader leading "from the back of the band" (Hallinger & Hausman 1994, p. 168). This view is in contrast to that espoused by Blase and Blase (1997), who contend that the leader needs to lead from the centre, enabling and supporting other school personnel in promoting change within the school.

Hallinger and Hausman report that they found that leadership "from the back" required considerable adaptability on the part of the school leaders, "not only because of the personal factors, but also because of the level of ambiguity and uncertainty in organizations during periods of transformational change" (1994, pp. 174 -175).

Another study, conducted in Canada by Jantzi and Leithwood, investigating the influences on teachers' perceptions of transformational leadership, revealed that a leader "doing work on behalf of one's school, and being seen to do such work, is likely to be the most powerful strategy for positively influencing a teacher's perception of

one's leadership" (1995, p. 23). Further, they comment that this seems to be the case regardless of the age or gender of the leader or teacher, and the size or type of school.

This approach of active involvement in educational change by the leader, is further substantiated by Leithwood, Jantzi, and Fernandez (1994, p. 92), and they refer to their study conducted in nine American secondary schools where they found that the dimensions of leadership which facilitated successful change were ones which "gave direction, purpose and meaning to teachers' work". This, they report, requires school leaders to focus on "vision building and goal consensus dimensions" within their leadership role (Leithwood, Jantzi, et al. 1994, p. 94). Leithwood, Jantzi, et al. also go on to stress that school leaders need to view current educational knowledge as "tentative and improvable" and possess "a passion for engaging in the struggle to improve our understandings" (1994, p. 255). Beare, Caldwell, and Millikan contend that this approach can be achieved by "gaining commitment to a set of values, statements of what ought to be, which then becomes the heart of the culture of the school" (1993, p. 163).

Blase and Blase strongly support this approach and develop the notion further by citing a study by Johnson (1993), which highlights the need for school leaders to be able to "recognise, value and facilitate the leadership of others in instructional, professional and organisational areas" (1997, p. 148) to bring about school change. However, the real challenge lies in establishing the means of achieving these ends. Bishop and Mulford cite Deal (1990) in capturing this leadership role, stating that school leaders "need to think about how they can convene, encourage and become active participants in rituals, social dramas and healing dances" (1996, p. 20) in transforming schools into successful educational institutions.

Goldring and Rallis reflect on this a little further and cite Cambon, Weiss, and Wyeth (1992), who state "teachers need thoughtful guidance from their leaders in the ways of shared decision making in gaining skill and tolerance for consensus building conflict resolution and perspective taking" (1993, p. 42). Louis and Murphy refer to research by Beck (1994) which highlights the unique role of the principal in identifying "the management of internal conflict within the school" (1994, p. 277) as one of the key features of creating a caring school community. Fullan agrees with this stance and states that "conflict and differences can make a constructive contribution in dealing with complex problems" (1998, p. 8) in the school's operation. However, he goes on to add that this requires leaders "to create opportunities for learning from dissonance" (Fullan 1998, p. 8). This, he observes is a highly emotional process and school leaders need to focus on building resilience, both personally and in others, founded on hope, which assists "when the going gets rough" and it "re-energizes teachers, reduces stress and can point to new directions" (Fullan 1998, p. 10). Anderson supports Fullan's (1991) perspective and states that "leaders need exceptional physical strength, ..., which requires an ability to deal with stress and difficult situations with some degree of resilience" (1998, p. 62).

Fundamental to this leadership approach is the development of positive relationships between members of the school team and community. The most respected leaders are described by Anderson as "those who are honest without putting others down, are willing to solve a problem so that as many people are respected as possible, and who show caring about other people without being manipulated" (1998, p. 120). Further, Lashway et al. contend that the leader's role is "people-intensive" (1996, p. 22) and it demands specific skills in communication and listening. They go on to point to the most valued trait amongst school leaders as being honesty, and refer

to Sergiovanni's (1992) work which captures the leader's role as being inherently moral and that a school leader "must be dedicated to creating a 'moral community' and 'virtuous school' " (Lashway et al. 1996, p. 30).

Sergiovanni elaborates upon this issue and states that school leaders must foster shared responsibility which "serves school purposes", and that they need to be "tough enough to demand a great deal from everyone, and ... tender enough to encourage the heart" (1996, pp. 184-185). He adds that a school leader needs to be committed to "serving, caring and protecting the school and its purposes" (Sergiovanni 1996, p. xvi).

Another important role of leaders in schools is what Goldring and Rallis term as being both a 'flag bearer' and 'bridger'. They contend that the leader's flag bearing role is one that "links the school to the external environment", whilst being a bridger requires listening to the school community so that "messages are transmitted and managed" as significant inputs into school policy making (Goldring & Rallis 1993, p. 148).

Fullan (1991) provides a comprehensive review of studies related to effective leadership, which clearly links the key aspects raised above. He draws upon the work of leading researchers including Wilson and Corcoran (1989), Lovis and Miles (1990) and Leithwood and Jantzi (1990). Fullan (1991) concludes that successful leaders focus on active leadership, high level communication with school members, reaching out to the school community in collaboration, sharing power and responsibility with others, and dedication to transforming the school's culture.

A large scale survey of Australian school principals, undertaken during 1994 on behalf of the Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council by Grady, Macpherson, Mulford, and Williamson, strongly supports those views. The

report from this survey captures what is termed 'the essence' of a good leader as involving

> people skills; compassion for, and sensitivity to, others' needs; trust in others; teamwork; humility; genuine love of what you are doing; respect for and pride in others' achievements; provision of a supportive environment; acting as a role model, especially by demonstrating calm in a crisis; being a lifelong learner, including having an ability to adapt to rapid societal change (and) having, and being able to articulate, an educational vision
>
> (Grady et al. 1994, p. 36).

The principals surveyed also highlighted many new skills which they believed needed learning in order to fulfil the self-managing role of school leaders. The list includes matters related to welfare, industrial relations, computing, legal issues, personnel services, resource management, and community relations (Grady et al., 1994). This list encapsulates the true diversity of the leadership role in schools today and the need for leaders who have the ability to empower others in handling ongoing pressures.

More recent research by Leithwood, Leonard & Sharratt (1998, p. 265) found that principals set a leadership example by "working hard, having lots of energy, being genuine in their beliefs, modeling openness, having good people skills, and showing evidence of learning by growing and changing themselves".

Wylie, in her study of New Zealand principals, also found that the leadership role has become greatly diversified and she states it is one of "providing direction {and} encouragement" (1997, p. 49), not only to teachers and students, but also to parents and members of the wider school community. Added to this, the increase in

administrative duties, as well as personnel, public relations and pastoral work, have all increased the workload of school leaders in New Zealand.

This view is also taken by Goldring and Sullivan, who state that "principals have a major role in leading the staff towards a parental/community involvement orientation" (1996, p. 210). Furthermore, they cite the work of Smylie (1992) who points out that high mutual trust and a willingness by school leaders to delegate responsibility to others within the school community are needed in schools today. School leaders can achieve this more effectively if they are prepared to share their knowledge and expertise about teaching and learning with parents and teachers (Goldring & Rallis, 1996). However, this demands a collaborative leadership approach by principals, involving the school, parents and community, with the entire school community being involved in a problem finding and solving process (Goldring & Sullivan, 1996).

Effective educational reform is one key challenge for today's school leaders, and Peters et al. (1996) are cited by Mulford et al. as stating that this requires the development of "learning communities which value differences and support critical reflection and encourage members to question, challenge and debate teaching and learning issues and dilemmas" (1996, p. 26).

Another leadership quality, seen as important for school leaders by Schmoker is "sincere, regular praise, plus recognition and celebration of accomplishment,..., which may be the most overlooked ingredients of results-oriented leadership" (1996, p. 104). Teachers can be self-directed in their teaching. However, "principals and other school leaders have a responsibility to reinforce individual and collective effort" asserts Schmoker (1996, p. 104). Success and improvement "energise" the change process in schools and Schmoker contends that "an atmosphere of acknowledgment and

appreciation is essential" (1996, p. 104). Public acknowledgment of achievement is both "confirming and affirming in a culture that has traditionally been marked by a high level of uncertainty" remarks Schmoker (1996, p. 104). School leadership must unite, "allowing teachers and other school personnel to see praise and recognition as an extension of the leader's character" contends Schmoker (1996, p. 105). The leadership approach needed is one of recognition, celebration and reward for the completion of meaningful accomplishments by school members, so that each person knows "without doubt, their efforts contribute meaningfully to the purpose and goals of the entire school" (Schmoker 1996, p. 107).

In a recent study, conducted by Leithwood et al. (1998, p. 264) it was also found that teachers perceived that their principals failed to hold "high performance expectations for their staffs".

Therefore, it can be seen that achieving success in this facilitative mode of leadership requires open communication, trust amongst team members, the achievement of consensus via discussion and debate, and valuing all members as equals in decision making. This approach encourages teachers' growth and utilises their personal expertise to greatest advantage, reflecting empowerment in action. This position is supported by Fullan (1991) who states that school leaders need to: be risk takers; empower others; focus on fundamental issues for development; build a vision with direction in the form of goals and change processes; and facilitate collaboration and feedback from teachers. Effective leaders "show an active interest by spending time talking with teachers, planning, helping teachers get together and being knowledgeable about what is happening" contends Fullan (1991, p. 168).

In summarising the literature reviewed so far, it can be seen that school leadership is a crucial factor in transforming schools for the 21st century. Key factors

highlighted in successful leadership appear to focus on leaders taking a facilitative approach, allowing school members to assume central leadership roles. However, this requires trust and hope on the part of all school members. Central to this leadership approach is effective communication, where collaborative problem identification and solving are seen as pivotal forces in the day to day operation of the school. In this school climate, expression of differing opinions is seen as a positive sign, with members of the school community coming together to collaborate in decision making. The ultimate outcome towards the transformation of the school's culture lies in improved educational outcomes for all students.

Support for this collaborative approach is provided by Hallinger and Heck who report, in their review of empirical research on school leadership, that it was apparent that "principal leadership that makes a difference is aimed towards influencing school processes that are directly linked to student learning" (1995, p. 33). They elaborate further by stating that the essence of successful leadership is "achieving results through others" (Hallinger & Heck 1995, p. 34).

A variation of the school leadership role frequently overlooked by researchers relates to principals who also have full-time or substantial teaching loads, particularly at small rural schools. A study based in New South Wales during 1996/97 addresses the role of teaching school principals in smaller schools. The study found that the main problems confronted by these principals related to aspects including conflicting time demands for teaching and administration, isolation, inadequacy of release time from classroom duties and lack of personal professional development opportunities to enhance their leadership skills (Gamage, 1998). However, the study also found that these principals were usually perceived by school stakeholders as facilitating the provision of quality education and positive relationships (Gamage, 1998).

Discussion to this point has focussed on a generic view of the school leader's role in facilitating change in the school leadership. Given the importance of taking a distributive or functional view of leadership, it would seem appropriate to investigate available literature on the role of senior staff other than principals, such as senior teachers, deputy heads and vice principals, in order to ascertain any specific differences in leadership roles as revealed by relevant research.

Senior Staff Leadership Roles

Senior staff members, other than the principal, also fulfil widely diverse leadership roles within schools today. The notion of senior staff being critical members of the leadership team is not new. However, Hill (1994) reports that research, undertaken in the United Kingdom by Alexander (1992) on the role of deputy head teachers, indicated that the majority of these deputies had class teaching as well as administrative responsibilities. They were involved in pastoral care of pupils and staff and had a strong involvement in policy and curriculum decisions and advice. Hill (1994) cites research by Nias, Southworth, and Yeomans (1989) when he reports that there were four primary task areas undertaken by deputy head teachers. These include: a communication function, keeping all school parties informed; a support function, praising and encouraging others in a pastoral care role; curricular leadership, leading teachers by personal professional example; and a partnership with the principal, supporting the daily operation of the school through positive actions and providing first hand insights and knowledge.

Hill (1994) states that, as a result of working with deputy head teachers, he has been able to collate some indications of what qualities a successful deputy should possess. These qualities include the ability to compromise, to be approachable and the

ability to seek advice from, as well as give advice to, others. Excellent skills in communication and classroom teaching and the possession of initiative and a cheerful, positive disposition were also seen as key indicators. Effective and efficient administrative skills, with an ability to prioritise and problem solve, were other key attributes highlighted by Hill (1994).

School effectiveness practices were investigated by Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis, and Ecob (1993) in the Junior School Project in the United Kingdom. In identifying key mechanisms of effective schooling they found that the deputy head had a significant role to play in this process and they state "our findings indicate clearly the value of involving the deputy head in ... decision making and planning" (1993, p. 17) within the school's operation.

Marshall and Rusch assert that leadership capacities in deputy head teachers, which will be valued in the future, will include "open-ness and inclusiveness in communication ... which are most evident in women's communication and leadership styles" (1995, p. 91). To support this position, they cite research by Barrett (1992) which shows that students, teachers and parents want a leader who "cares and wants to build relationships and a community, but also want schools to openly and effectively deal with race, class and gender issues" (Marshall & Rusch 1995, p. 91).

The overlap of leadership roles at all levels is evident, although senior staff leaders' perceptions indicate a leadership support role, based on day to day operational matters more often than strategic, policy related matters. School leadership, it can be seen, is a diverse and multi-faceted role, whether it be at principal or other senior staff levels. Effective communication, in the developing and nurturing of all members of the school community who collaboratively attend to the successful operation of the

school, is a hallmark of successful school leadership. Investigation of leadership as specific to early childhood settings would now seem appropriate.

Leadership in Early Childhood Education: The Current Situation

Leadership in early childhood education is a complex and controversial issue at this time, and Rodd poses an extremely pertinent question ... "What is meant by 'leadership' in the early childhood profession?" (1994, p. xvi). As she comments, much has been written about leadership in political, business, manufacturing, and educational arenas and professions, "but it is rarely discussed in relation to early childhood" (Rodd 1994, p. xvi). Rapid change is affecting all areas of schooling. The early childhood area is experiencing the impact of educational and social changes, which has necessitated the expansion of the leadership role for early childhood leaders. Rodd (1994) cites Stonehouse and Woodrow (1992), when she states that this requires "sensitive and skilled leadership, in the search to define quality in early childhood" (p. xvi). Further, Rodd observes that owing to the absence of leadership in this area of schooling little is being achieved in relation to facilitating "the gradual and systematic implementation of changes" (1994, p. xvi).

Leadership for young children and their families is of vital importance for the next century. "It will no longer be acceptable (or feasible), as in the past, to rely on colleagues from other professions, such as primary teaching, social work and nursing, to provide leadership models and initiatives" (Rodd 1994, p. xvii). Bringing in leaders from other professions is also inappropriate, contends Rodd (1994).

In the Tasmanian early childhood arena, the extent of this practice is not fully documented. However, in the writer's opinion, based upon wide experience as a senior staff member responsible for K-2 education and extensive ongoing interaction with

schools, it could be said that, in many schools, early childhood education is lacking organisational and professional leadership at this time. Part of the reason for this lack is changes in selection processes for the appointment of senior teachers responsible for early childhood leadership. This has moved from being recognised as a specialised to a more generic role, with the result that many of the current early childhood leaders no longer possess formal knowledge in the area, actually having a primary trained background. "Leadership in early childhood education must come from teachers trained in early childhood who can progress to leadership at perhaps government or policy levels" (Rodd 1994, p. xvii). Bredekamp (1992) and Vander Ven (1991) state that early childhood education needs a systematic plan to address the leadership problems, so that leaders can be identified and nurtured and thus lead the profession into the next millennium.

Rodd (1994) cites American research by Vander Ven (1991) who confirmed that few early childhood leaders felt comfortable undertaking supervisory and management roles with adults in their schools. Vander Ven (1991) reports that respondents, in his study, reported "not being comfortable with activities ... such as managing programs, marketing, influencing policy, lobbying, making speeches, fund raising and research" (Rodd 1994, p. xvii). This is a reflection of the fact that "for at least the past two decades members of the early childhood field have been noted for their reluctance to identify with the concept of leadership as part of their professional role" contends Rodd (1994, p. 1).

It is interesting to note that the issues raised by the early childhood leaders involved in Vander Ven's (1991) research exhibit considerable congruence with the findings of an Australian study, related to the self-managing principal, undertaken by

Grady et al. (1994), especially in relation to the principals' feelings about community relations, promotional, and personnel issues.

Rodd (1994) goes on to add that a further concern was the fact that respondents in the early childhood leaders study (Vander Ven, 1991) identified more readily with the attributes ascribed to early childhood leaders in the mid 1970s (Almy, 1975). These related to a mothering, nurturing role, displaying "patience, warmth, capacity for nurturing and high energy level" (Rodd 1994, p. xvii). She warns that, unless there is a clear identification and recognition of the role of leadership in early childhood education, members will fail to meet "the demands for competent administrators, supervisors, trainers, educators, researchers and advocates" (Rodd 1994, p. xvii).

Rodd contends that leadership in the early childhood profession requires "influencing the behaviour of others, particularly staff and parents", effective administration of the program, "supervising staff and guiding parents" to enhance their personal development, and "planning for, and implementing, change" to improve the operation of the early childhood centre or school (1994, p. 5). "The early childhood leader has a professional responsibility to attend to child well-being, adult morale and centre goal attainment" asserts Rodd (1994, p. 6).

The provision of leadership in early childhood education should encompass three issues, defined by Sergiovanni (1990) as being empowerment, enablement and enhancement, states Rodd (1994). Empowerment is concerned with shared leadership leading to "increased responsibility and accountability throughout the group" (Rodd 1994, p. 6). Enablement concerns the leader providing "the means and opportunities" (Rodd 1994, p. 6) to achieve individual and group goals. Enhancement is explained as

where "leader and follower roles are interwoven to produce increased commitment and extraordinary performance" (Rodd 1994, p. 6). Once again, the facilitative mode of leadership, based upon team collaboration and empowerment, is recommended as a means of maximising the likelihood of leadership success. It might be, however, that those undertaking leadership in early childhood settings have different expectations of the requirements. It is to this theme that the this paper now turns.

Why Early Childhood Leaders Are Different

Much has been written about leadership for educational settings, but Rodd remarks that "it is important to understand the special circumstances which impact upon leadership in the early childhood field" (1994, p. 6). Therefore, it could be contended that not all educational leadership writings have relevant implications for early childhood settings. One key aspect highlighted by Rodd relates to the issue that "the overwhelming majority of the research has been conducted with men in positions of leadership" (1994, p. 6), in roles which have a high proportion of male incumbents. Few studies have explored the role of women especially in early childhood settings. Rodd explores research by Kinney (1992) in early childhood arenas, where it is argued that women carry out the same leadership roles as men, but these are carried out "in a facilitating, rather than authoritarian, style" (1994, p. 7). However, there appears to be little research to prove or refute the claims by Kinney (1992). Rodd (1994) comments that few other professions have women leading groups, composed almost solely of women, be they teachers, ancillary staff or female parents.

Gender and Early Childhood Leadership

In investigating the role of women in educational leadership, Fullan states that "as a group, women are more likely to evidence behaviour associated with effective leadership" (1991, p. 163). He refers to a report by Marshall and Marshall (1989) on studies of women as school leaders. It showed "that women are more attuned to curriculum issues, instructional leadership, teachers' concerns, parent involvement, staff development, collaborative planning strategies (and) community building" (Fullan 1991, p. 183). However, Fullan (1991) stresses that these findings refer to women "as a group" and that there are many research findings, which point to effective practices by men in leadership roles.

Data gathered by Singleton in a study of eight deputy heads (six women and two men) suggest that "women may work in a more cooperative, participative, 'people-centred' way than do their male counterparts" (1993, p. 174). However, for this to occur Singleton contends that a series of difficulties need to be addressed including the stereotyping of women as "emotional, unstable ...{and}... not decisive enough", the lack of female role models, the isolation of women within managerial organisations, and "the channelling of women into gender appropriate kinds of work or areas within a job" (1993, p. 174).

A further view on the issue of gender in leadership is given by Ozga and she observes that "women form the majority of the workforce in education", but they are "under-represented in its management" (1993, p. 4). She states that this may be explained by perceptions of women being inadequate as leaders, due to a perceived lack of power and capability to control educational operations. Women's leadership inadequacies have been widely reported, especially during the 1950s and 1960s, contends Ozga, but this is changing and she points to recent literature which suggests

that "women's leadership style is less hierarchical and more democratic", and that they "appear more flexible and sensitive" (1993, p. 11), than their male counterparts.

This issue is further expanded by Shakeshaft when she states "numerous studies have been published which document how well women perform in administrative positions in schools" (1995, p. 12). She refers to studies that demonstrate that women develop "a more democratic, participatory style" of leadership, where positive relationships are central to the day to day operation of the school (Shakeshaft 1995, p. 12). Porter refers to Shakeshaft's findings which show that "women are better at relationships, taking teaching and learning perspectives, and the inclusion of the community" (1995, p. 238). A slightly differing view is taken by Macbeath, Moos and Riley who contend that women leaders have been encouraged to be "cooperative, emotional, supportive and vulnerable" (1996, p. 245), and they suggest that this may explain why women today are more likely to be interactive leaders.

Shakeshaft (1995) hypothesises that any perceived leadership superiority lies in women leaders' ability to communicate and socialise more effectively than their male counterparts, for as Macbeath et al. (1996) contend male leaders in schools have been encouraged to be competitive, assertive and in control (Shakeshaft, 1995). The women leaders' greater interpersonal facility leads to the provision of an environment for teachers which is empowering, where teachers "are encouraged to speak, to give their opinions, and to problem solve" (Shakeshaft 1995, p. 21). Shakeshaft concludes by stating "it is the language of power. And it is women administrators who are most likely to use this language of power" (1995, pp. 21-22).

In a study by Hurty, it was found that women in the principalship demonstrated emotional energy, seen in their "willingness to use, honestly and openly, a full range of emotions in their work with teachers, students and the community" (1995, p. 385).

Further, women principals "nurtured growth", engaged in talking with rather than at others "by listening to, and learning from, other points of view" (Hurty 1995, p. 385). Hurty (1995) also found that women leaders kept the needs and desires of others in the school in mind whilst making decisions, and that all parties worked in a collaborative way to bring about change in schools. The elements of the women's leadership approach was described by Hurty as being epitomised by "reciprocal talk, emotional energy, pondered mutuality, nurtured growth and collaborative change" (1995, p. 395).

This viewpoint is supported by Regan (1995), who states that women as school leaders demonstrate collaborative working relationships, caring for others, courage to attempt unknown challenges whilst engaging in risk taking, attention to the acquisition of knowledge, as well as an ability to formulate and express a school vision, leading by example. These qualities, asserts Regan (1995), are needed in today's schools by both men and women school leaders.

However, a warning is given by Jantzi and Leithwood (1995) in relation to gender influences on the role of the school leader. Following the completion of their study on gender and leadership, they say "our results should be viewed as a caution to those many others now conducting leadership studies, with a focus on gender" that "the most that can be claimed is that the relationship between gender and leaders' perceptions is statistically significant" (Jantzi & Leithwood 1995, pp. 24-25). They go on to add that their study had significant limitations with the sample population being "heavily skewed towards women teachers in elementary schools" (Jantzi & Leithwood 1995, p. 25) and this writer believes that variables such as these need to be kept in mind when reviewing gender issues in leadership.

Early Childhood Leaders: Further Considerations

An aspect of leadership in early childhood, discussed by Rodd (1994), relates to the diversity of clientele supervised by these leaders. The client range includes young children, experienced and inexperienced teachers who have differing qualifications and life experiences, untrained support staff who have little knowledge of the professional issues of early childhood teaching but a diverse variety of prior life experiences, and parents who bring their children to school with widely varying beliefs, assumptions, and expectations. Successful leadership with these diverse groups requires "sophisticated and complex communication skills" (Rodd 1994, p. 8) whilst working with, and understanding, the specific needs of children, parents, and staff.

Early childhood education is a 'people service' and Rodd asserts "communication and interpersonal relationships are the foundation or building blocks" (1994, p. 22) on which education for young children is founded. Consideration of previous research, including that of Lashway et al. (1996), Fullan (1991) and Grady et al. (1994), confirms the pivotal importance of high level communication skills in all aspects of educational leadership.

A third leadership aspect of extreme importance relates to the specific professional knowledge pertaining to early childhood educational issues. This professional knowledge is crucial in facilitating the effective day to day operation of the early childhood section of the school. Rodd comments that the many instances of physical isolation of early childhood leaders from peers and colleagues means that "professional judgement about children, families and program management must be exercised in many cases quickly, confidently and independently" (1994, p. 8). Therefore, in the role of instructional leadership, problem solving, and decision making skills are of paramount importance, as is specific knowledge related to what is

appropriate for early childhood students and their families. Leithwood, Begley, et al. strongly support this stance and state that "we consider a willingness and ability to work continuously on mastering the technical core (domain-specific knowledge in cognitive science terms) to be a minimum requirement for leaders of future schools" (1994, p. 74). They further elaborate, saying that leadership should not involve classroom teaching duties, owing to the nature of the leader's role, but "it is feasible to become an expert critic and coach in many areas of the technical core" (Leithwood, Begley, et al. 1994, p. 74).

Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis and Ecob report that in their research they found that purposeful leadership in junior schooling occurred where school leaders were "sufficiently involved in, and knowledgable about, what went on in classrooms" (1993, p. 11). They also found that other senior staff had "a major role to play in promoting the effectiveness of these schools" (Mortimore et al. 1993, p. 12), which translated into sharing responsibilities and delegatory processes by the school principal. This needs to occur in early childhood education to raise the profession to a more informed, innovative status.

Is There a Specific Leadership Style Best Suited to Early Childhood Education?

Little has been written in recent times about successful leadership in early childhood education, especially in Australian and Tasmanian settings. Rodd (1994) comments on the limited nature of these studies and on the critical impact this deficit has had on the early childhood profession in general. She refers to one study by Neugebauer (1985) and reports he indicated that the style of leadership for early childhood settings needs to be related to teaching style, the nature of interpersonal

relationships between staff and leader and the involvement of staff in decision making processes. Rodd (1994) reports that Neugebauer (1985) asserts that this leadership style can be described as democratic motivation, and is characterised by a warm, supportive approach based on two-way communication, involvement of staff in goal setting, ongoing feedback, confidence in decision making and risk taking and a belief in the capability of staff to attain goals which have been collaboratively set. However, a crucial issue is raised by Rodd when she comments that "it is not the style of leadership that the leader believes she is using, but how the style is perceived and experienced by the group" (1994, p. 12). For this reason, it is often the quality of communication by the leader, which determines the success of interpersonal relationships and interactions. In fact, it can impact positively or negatively on the entire operation of the early childhood setting. As Leithwood, Begley, et al. assert, in the future there will be a premium placed "on the possession of effective communication and interpersonal skills as vehicles through which ... technical knowledge can be put to good use" (1994, p. 5).

A recent study, completed in Western Australia by Stamopoulos (1998) on principals' perceptions on their role in early childhood education, found that most principals in the study "have primary school training and limited experience in early childhood education,...., yet are expected to make decisions regarding early childhood directions, policy, programming and evaluation" (1998, p. 26). Stamopoulos refers to literature which has demonstrated clear differences between primary and early childhood education and further contends that, in the United States of America, school personnel and parents "have moved away from developmental needs of young children towards more formal curriculum-driven approaches" (1998, p. 26). The catalyst for this move is clear, but given the importance of school leadership on

teachers' performance and students' outcomes, lack of technical expertise may well be a contributing factor.

The Australian Schools Council has, over the past decade, focussed increasingly on the importance of early years education. Principals have needed to become "highly efficient managers (and) dynamic educational leaders" (Stamopoulos 1998, p. 27). In Western Australia the changes in the early years organisational structures for schools have meant that principals have become responsible for "appraising pre-primary teachers, co-ordinating continuity of learning from Kindergarten to Year 1, and ensuring the cohesion of the program across the school" comments Stamopoulos (1998, p. 27). This leads to concerns related to the principal's knowledge of early childhood education, which is crucial in making appropriate decisions about this area of the school. Stamopoulos states "literature supports the need for school leaders to hold a deep knowledge of educational components in all areas in their school" (1998, p. 27) and she refers to, amongst others, Caruso (1989), Sergiovanni (1984) and Smith and Andrew (1989) to support this claim.

In the study of Western Australian principals conducted by Stamopoulos, it was reported that the principals stated that they had "a lack of knowledge and experience in pre-primary education" (1998, p. 27) and that there was a lack of professional development to support their needs. Principals also perceived that early childhood education is a specialised field which requires specific knowledge, curriculum, teaching style and classroom management, "which are all different from that of the primary school" (Stamopoulos 1998, p. 27). Of the 24 principals surveyed by Stamopoulos, 22 reported that they held no qualifications in early childhood education and most principals perceived that "they did not hold a sound understanding of the content and

structure of one sector of primary schools - the curriculum for pre-primary education" (1998, p. 29).

This is indeed an issue of great concern for Australian early childhood educators today, for as Jorde-Bloom (1992) has stated, a leader of early childhood education is a "gatekeeper to quality" (Rodd 1994, p. 166). The role is complex and of critical importance, asserts Jorde-Bloom (1992), "requiring conceptual and practical skill in organisational theory and leadership, child development and early childhood programming, fiscal and legal issues and committee, parent and community relations" (Rodd 1994, p. 166). As very little role-specific training has been available for Australian early childhood leaders, Rodd observes that most have "learned 'on the job' with support from some in-service training" (1994, p. 166). Stamopoulos concurs with this viewpoint, and she refers to her Western Australian study which showed that "most principals surveyed reported professional development needs in respect to educational issues" in early childhood education (1994, p. 169). Furthermore, Stamopoulos reports that principals expressed reluctance to seek assistance from their Education Department on updating their skills in early childhood education as they feared it may prove "damaging to their image if they were to admit they lacked knowledge in this area" (1994, p. 155). Given the widening leadership requirements, it is doubtful that an ad hoc approach currently been applied to professional development of early childhood leaders, will suffice in the future.

To be responsive to the rapid changes occurring in society and education today, early childhood leaders need to engage in research activity, contends Rodd (1994). This is "an effective way for early childhood practitioners to improve the quality of their services and to shape their image and reputation" (Rodd 1994, p. 146). Ebbeck (1992) concurs with this view and asserts that early childhood leaders have a key role

in defining and promoting quality early childhood practices. "There is a pressing need for the research base of early childhood in Australia to progress further" states Ebbeck (1992, p. 81).

Ebbeck proposes that it is common sense to believe that early childhood leaders who undertake research and disseminate the findings "are in a good position to perceive and influence needed changes" (1992, p. 81). This is especially so with respect to influencing policy makers and decision making processes. "Early childhood education has been beset, like most professions, by decisions not based on authoritative research and by uncoordinated efforts" (Ebbeck 1992, p. 88). Unfortunately, early childhood education in Australia has, for too long, been strongly influenced by research from the United States and the United Kingdom (Ebbeck, 1992) and it is time for early childhood leaders in Australia to project their influence by supporting what is appropriate for early childhood students in research, educational and political arenas.

Rodd states that the early childhood profession demands so much "physical, emotional and intellectual stamina" that leaders must have "a balanced personal and professional life which enables (them) to meet others' needs while ensuring (their) own needs are also met" (1994, p. 49). Congruence between these observations and those previously cited from Lashway et al. (1996) and Anderson (1998) is clearly apparent, focussing on the need for psychologically well-balanced leaders in all areas of schooling.

Further to this, Rodd (1994) believes that skills in decision making, conflict resolution, building and leading a team and working with parents and the community are vital for early childhood leaders. These skills are also highlighted as key attributes

for educational leadership by many other educational researchers cited previously, including Anderson (1998), Leithwood, Begley, et al. (1994), and Fullan (1991).

Conclusions

The inherent implications of these findings have clear messages for early childhood leaders in Tasmania. It would appear that key generic leadership skills have been identified that are pertinent to all educational senior staff leaders. However, the specific importance of professional technical knowledge, directly related to a particular area of education (in this case early childhood), must not be discounted. Effective leadership decisions need to be founded upon sound theoretical bases. The probability of this occurring with early childhood leaders, who have no theoretical foundation (and often limited experience) in early childhood practice, must be extremely restricted.

It has been seen that students' educational development can be directly linked to the quality of leadership provided in the school. Therefore, the challenge for early childhood leaders would seem to be related to the need to establish a collaborative culture, where goal setting, as well as problem finding and problem solving, are central to the school's operation. Leaders need to promote a caring, supportive environment where all participants, teachers, students and parents, feel confident to take risks and make decisions towards the task of enhancing the educational provision for students in the school.

However, as noted previously, this will only occur when school leaders promote and demonstrate quality communication and high level interpersonal skills within the school. This is the foundation of quality education of the future. Rodd agrees with this and further contends that early childhood leaders need to establish "positive attitudes

to relationships with others ... because children's optimum development and learning is dependent upon quality interpersonal relationships, as is the quality of the partnership which will develop between staff and parents" (1994, pp. 24-25)

Further, it can be expected that rapid social changes will continue to have a dynamic impact on schools in the future. It is the school leader's role to address this issue and this may require learning new skills to deal with the needs of a more diverse clientele. Subsequently, Rodd states that development of "leadership skills is a vital and critical challenge for early childhood professionals in Australia ... if the provision of socially and culturally responsive services for young children and their families is to be successful" (1994, p. xvii). This should be a clear directive for Tasmanian early childhood leaders. Access to the knowledge and skills of effective leadership at the school and community level needs to be made available to all early childhood leaders, as "the role of the leader and the manner in which that role is carried out". (Rodd 1994, p. 165) has a critical impact upon the quality of the educational provision for children. However, Fullan (1998) reminds us that the way ahead for school leaders will not be easy. He contends that hope is vital for all leaders and their school communities. In this study, these current trends and directions identified in the literature will be explored, in relation to K-2 leadership in Tasmanian schools.

In Chapter 3 the procedures and methods utilised in the design, data gathering, and analytical processes of the study are presented and discussed.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD AND DESIGN

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study, undertaken in selected Tasmanian government schools, was to investigate the nature of the leadership role in relation to early childhood education. The study also aimed to establish the perceived impact of having leaders responsible for early childhood who have limited technical knowledge and expertise in this specific area. More specifically, the perceived impact, firstly on early childhood teachers and secondly on the educational provision for K-2 students, was considered.

In this chapter, the following aspects of the methodology used to achieve the purposes of the study will be described under the headings: ethical considerations (including seeking permission to conduct the study); definition of the study population; sample size for the study; selection of the sample; selection of the data gathering approaches; survey methodology; reliability and validity factors; survey design and construction; need for pilot survey; modification of the survey questions; processes involved in survey administration, and data analysis procedures.

Ethical Considerations of the Research, Including the Process of Seeking and Gaining Approval for the Study

Ethical considerations are an important issue for all researchers. The researcher understood that problems of an ethical nature could be related to the subject matter of the research as well as to its methods and procedures (Burns, 1997). The key concern for all researchers relates to the necessity for all study participants to be treated with

respect and dignity, with concern being displayed for their welfare, as well as adherence to state and federal laws, and professional standards in relation to research with human participants (Gay, 1996).

A key ethical imperative, considered by the researcher, related to the issue that all participants must understand the purposes and procedures related to the study, as the investigation's success relied on the cooperation of the participants in the research project. The importance of personal contact with all participants, by the researcher prior to the study's commencement, was seen as being of key importance. In this way, it was believed that any questions or concerns raised by the study's participants would be addressed proficiently and personally. Gay states "achieving full cooperation ... requires that you invest as much time as necessary to discuss your study with the principal [and] teachers" (1996, p. 90).

Cooperation of key educational personnel was needed for the study to proceed. Firstly, as the study was to be completed in Tasmanian state schools, the informal approval of district superintendents was seen as fundamental to the study's planning phase. The researcher contacted these district officers, or their assistants, and the purpose and value of the proposed study was outlined and discussed. Informal support for the study at this level was obtained. Subsequently, it was necessary to gain formal, written approval from the Department of Education to enable the study to be carried out in selected Tasmanian government schools.

It was also necessary, for the purpose of this study, to submit the research proposal to the University of Tasmania Ethics Committee (Human Experimentation). This process is a formal step in monitoring ethical issues, related to the study being undertaken, and is designed to protect both the participants and the researcher. As this process has been described as time-consuming, both at the compilation and

approval stages (Herzog, 1996), the researcher commenced the submission writing process early in the study.

Another aspect of ethical concern for the researcher related to confidentiality and anonymity issues for participants. It was perceived that confidentiality issues could be attended to in a variety of ways, including the use of written communication from, and personal communication with, the researcher before the study commenced, as well as during the data compilation, analysis and reporting phases. At all times during the research, it was seen as essential that each participant could feel confident that the researcher was totally committed to maintaining individual privacy.

The researcher was also aware that all participants should understand that they had the right to discontinue their participation in the study at any time. Again it was considered that the best means of attending to this aspect was through ongoing written and personal contact between participants and the researcher.

Further elaboration, regarding these ethical issues, will be undertaken throughout this chapter when each aspect of the study's design is examined in greater detail.

Definition of the Study Population

One of a researcher's first tasks is to identify the population for the study to enable reliable, meaningful data to be obtained from the research being undertaken (Herzog, 1996). The group of interest to the researcher for the purposes of this study was defined as school principals, other school leaders designated as having early childhood leadership responsibilities, and early childhood teachers in Tasmanian state schools. This population has a common characteristic in that both, school leaders and

teachers, have a vested interest in the education of early childhood children in Tasmania.

For the purposes of this study, it was seen as impractical to survey all principals and early childhood leaders and teachers within Tasmania. At the same time, it was considered important to have an accessible target population. Gay describes the definition of the target population as being "generally a realistic choice, not an idealistic one" (1996, p. 113). Therefore, to optimise the availability of the subjects and for reasons of convenience and efficiency, two of the seven Department of Education school districts were chosen as a suitably representative population source for Tasmanian state schools. The chosen districts were comprised of a total of 8 District High schools (21% of the overall sample population) and 37 Primary schools (79% of the sample population).

Sample Size

Sample size is a critical element of research design and therefore, lengthy consideration was given to the size of the sample for this study. Educational writers, including Slavin (1992) and Gay (1996), contend that sample size needs to be large enough to allow generalisations from the study to be made, with some experts citing "the magic 'general guideline' to be 30" (Gay 1996, p. 123). However, on the other hand, Burns (1997, p. 87) contends that "size is less important than representativeness". The latter view was seen as a guiding principle within this study, with a stratified sampling process being considered a successful means of gaining a sample representative of the population for the two selected school districts and, therefore, also of all schools in the state of Tasmania.

Selection of the Sample

The process of selecting a sample for the study was seen as important. This was so firstly because "the 'goodness' of the sample determines the generalizability of the results" (Gay 1996, p. 113) and secondly, because it was essential that the sampled individuals "are representative of all individuals to whom ... the results are to apply" (Slavin 1992, p. 62). The key word in sampling the target population is "representativeness" (Burns, 1997) and, as there are a variety of techniques available to assist with systematic sampling procedures, consideration was initially given to using a random sampling procedure. However, the risk of sampling error was seen as being relatively high. It was deemed important that the sample contain a more accurate representation of the state's population of school and early childhood leaders than may be achieved by using random sampling. To ensure that all groups were "represented in the sample in the same proportions as they are in the population", stratified sampling was seen as "one way to reduce this [random sampling] error and increase precision" (Burns 1997, p. 83). Stratified sampling was chosen as a means of avoiding the over-representation of individual groups in the study, as Tuckman (1994, p. 239) states "stratification represents a good operational strategy for screening members of the population into and out of the study". Employing stratification in the sampling process was seen as a means of enabling the researcher "to include parameters of interest and to control the internal validity in terms of selection factors" (Tuckman 1994, p. 239). To satisfy the central theme of interest for this study, it was necessary to ensure that all levels of early childhood and school leaders, in schools of various sizes within the two chosen districts, were represented within the research target group.

To achieve a representative sample it was deemed essential that the target population be considered in terms of the schools' student enrolments. This variable is used within the Department of Education to define entitlement levels for allocation of teaching staff, as well as for leadership appointments, in terms of substantive levels for both principals and senior staff. In this way, it was seen that sub-groups comprising principals, early childhood senior staff, and teachers from small to large schools, both primary and district high, should be represented in the sample population.

Hence, for the purpose of characterising the target population, the schools in the two districts were defined into five sub-groups according to the full-time equivalent student enrolment numbers in Kindergarten to Grade 6. The following school populations were used to define those sub-groups.

- up to 110 full-time equivalent students,
- between 111 and 200 full-time equivalent students,
- between 201 and 300 full-time equivalent students,
- between 301 and 400 full-time equivalent students, and
- more than 400 full-time equivalent students.

Another aspect, seen as important to gaining a representative sample, related to the socio-economic standing of the schools. Principals and other senior staff members have been found to display differing leadership roles within schools of high and low socio-economic standing (Fullan, 1991). To ensure that the schools selected for the sample (from the five sub-groups listed above) represented diverse socio-economic standing, the Department of Education, Training, Community and Cultural Development's Economic Needs Index (1998) for each of the schools in the two districts was considered. This Economic Needs Index is a rating of the economic needs of each school's locality and is a factor utilised for funding allocation purposes

within the Tasmanian state educational system. As the sample population was to be based upon the distribution of school size and related to the distribution of Economic Needs Index of the schools in the two districts, it was considered that "variance [would] be restricted and as a corollary, sampling error reduced" (Burns 1997, p. 83). It has been suggested that selection of individuals in a stratified sample needs to be completed in a random manner (Gay, 1996; Burns, 1997). However, to achieve a representative sample based upon the defined school size strata, it was seen as important to logically select a range of participating schools utilising the Economic Needs Index as a guide for inclusion. Therefore, in compilation of the sample, firstly the schools with the highest and lowest Economic Needs Index from each sub-group were selected. The remaining schools required for each group sample were then selected, based upon the distribution of Economic Needs Index. Selection of schools by this means was seen as appropriate, allowing a proportionally representative number of schools to be included in the study (Burns, 1997). Thirty schools were selected utilising this approach.

The stratified sample population comprised the principals, early childhood senior staff and early childhood teachers for each of the thirty selected schools. The approximate numbers of school principals, other K-2 school leaders and early childhood teachers within the target schools were supplied by the relevant district officers. These numbers were: 30 principals, 30 early childhood senior staff members and 245 K-2 teachers.

Selection of the Data Gathering Approach

Selection of an appropriate data gathering tool for the study was considered to be of the utmost importance. What was required was a means of collecting "standardised, quantifiable information from all members of the sample population" (Gay 1996, p. 255). It was also essential that each participant's relevant information, preferences and attitudes, related to leadership for early childhood education, be sought.

Surveys were seen as a means of fulfilling these criteria since their use "makes it possible to measure what a person knows (knowledge or information), what a person likes and dislikes (values and preferences), and what a person thinks (attitudes and beliefs)" (Tuckman 1994, p. 216). Respondents, via self-report style surveys, could also describe information related to observations concerning leadership in the selected schools. Utilising a survey-based approach also has the potential to gather information from diverse settings in a short time span (Burns, 1997). Time-related and diversity issues such as these were seen as highly relevant to the research being undertaken.

Other advantages of surveys were seen in their having a relatively low financial cost factor, compared to face-to-face interviews, and also the fact that some reliability factors can be attended to with all respondents receiving the same set of questions, with no variations in presentation. Consideration was also given to other advantages raised by Burns (1997), regarding respondents being able to answer the questions in their own time without having to find a time suitable for both themselves and the researcher, and that participants' fears or embarrassments would be less intrusive, which may help in ensuring that responses, particularly from teachers, would be more truthful.

However, it was acknowledged that certain problems do exist when using self-report type surveys. The researcher acknowledged the issues raised by Tuckman. These include the need for the researcher to have full cooperation from the respondents for the completion of the survey, the need for respondents to "tell what *is* rather than what they think ought to be or what the researcher wants to hear" (1994, p. 216), as well as being able to state their feelings and thoughts about the issues raised.

Surveys have a disadvantage which relates to lack of flexibility, with the researcher being unable to seek expansion on any ambiguous, incomplete or inaccurate information supplied (Burns, 1997). This aspect was acknowledged and consideration was given to this during the design of the questionnaires. Respondents were given some flexibility in their means of response by the use of both structured (closed) and open-ended questions. It was also recognised that the quality of the questionnaire can heavily influence the quality of the data received. Complex instruments, ambiguity, and vagueness have all been known to cause poor responses (Burns, 1997) and the importance of keeping questions simple, clear, and unambiguous was heeded (May, 1997). These aspects were noted as having the potential to limit the validity of the surveys. Nevertheless, survey use was still considered to be the most efficient means of gathering the required data for this investigation.

Further to this, May contends that "good survey research follows a common process in the testing and development of theory whereby a hypothesis or hypotheses will be formed" (1997, p. 83) or, in this case, tested. The central hypothesis, in relation to this study, was that school leaders' and early childhood teachers' perceptions of leadership for early childhood education differ, and that this has an adverse effect on some early childhood teachers and the educational provision for early

childhood students. A second hypothesis was that school leaders with limited technical knowledge and experience in the early childhood education area have a negative impact on teaching and learning within early childhood education. In-depth consideration was given to the appropriateness of the questions to be asked, as selection of the questions is also governed by the aims of the research being undertaken (May, 1997). The researcher was also aware that questions also needed to be formulated so that responses could be categorised and quantified (May, 1997).

Survey Methodology

Surveys, through the use of questionnaires, are relevant data gathering procedures for the collection of respondents' attitudes and demographic information. Research of this type is "predicated on a rigorous approach that aims to remove as much bias from the research process as possible and produce results that are replicable by following the same methods" (May 1997, p. 84). The implications of maintaining a rigorous approach in this study demanded standardisation of design, administration and analysis of the survey, as well as attention to factors affecting validity and reliability. This focus is supported by Slavin who contends that "in survey research, the most important tasks are to be sure that the measures being used are reliable and valid" (1992, p. 62).

Attention to Reliability and Validity

It was acknowledged that, just as a good research design and selection of an important research problem do not automatically make for a successful study, aspects related to reliability and validity factors are also central to the overall research process. In designing the surveys, the main goal, related to reliability, was seen as being able to

create measures that would "consistently show differences between individuals who are really different and that would show the same scores for individuals who are the same ... on two occasions" (Slavin 1992, p. 76). Aspects which needed to be heeded in compilation of the survey related to characteristics of the survey itself (especially related to avoiding ambiguous items) as well as issues related to administration of the survey, which could be related to poorly composed survey directions (Gay, 1996). Clarity, in both survey items and directions, was seen as a key component in achieving reliable survey data.

The potential reliability of the survey was also seen as being affected by each respondent's personal condition, such as tiredness or lack of motivation for the survey issues under consideration, at the time of completing the survey. Although little can be done about these factors, allowing the completion of the survey in the respondent's own time can potentially assist in this regard. This was the intention behind the study surveys being designed for individual completion and return by mail.

Checking for internal reliability within any survey is always of great importance. As one means of achieving this, reliability-check survey items addressing common factors, but with different wording, were included. Where these survey items involved a negative and positive approach to similar aspects, inverse responses were seen as an indicator of probable reliability.

The writer recognised the deleterious effect which the non-return of surveys could have upon the study's external validity. The question of whether the responses from those who chose not to return their surveys would have fitted the same distribution as those who did would limit confidence in the accuracy of extension of study findings to the general population. It was acknowledged that postal surveys traditionally have a poor return rate, with Burns (1997) reporting that this is seldom

higher that 50%. It was noted that this could lead to validity problems. However, it has also been reported that return rates can be considerably higher from specific target groups where respondents are interested in the topic (May, 1997). In an attempt to maximise the return rate in the study, it was proposed to provide stamped addressed envelopes, which would be included with the initial survey posting. Reminders were to be sent out after appropriate periods.

To ensure validity in content of the surveys, a variety of measurement scales were employed. Selected closed items in the surveys were used to correlate with other open-ended items, to enable some measure of the content validity of the data gathered to be carried out.

In summary, it was acknowledged that a number of factors may influence the reliability of the survey results, such as factors related to the survey items and directions, the condition of the respondents and issues related to the administration of the survey (Burns, 1997). In each case, where possible, steps were taken to address those aspects of reliability.

Correlation of data via differing means of data collection similarly addressed validity aspects, in relation to completion of surveys. Another aspect taken into consideration was that of the potential respondents' interest in the issues being examined. Anecdotal comments from fellow researchers indicated that participants are more likely to return their surveys if they are interested in the topic under study.

Assurance of confidentiality was also considered as an important aspect in obtaining an appropriate return rate on the surveys. It was understood that, if the researcher assured confidentiality, it was more likely to produce more valid data from a greater number of survey respondents (Burns, 1997). However, as the researcher needed to be able to follow up non-returned items, it was decided that an identifying

numbering system would be used instead of respondents using their own names on the returned surveys. Tuckman (1994) and Burns (1997) strongly suggest that this is a highly recommended research practice. In this way, although it was not possible to guarantee the respondents total anonymity, it was possible to assure them that only a number would identify the returned information during the stages of data entry and analysis. The list of the schools and corresponding allocated numbers would be destroyed prior to data entry, analysis, and result compilation stages of the study. Participants were also assured that security of data received on the returned questionnaires would be maintained within the safe-keeping of the researcher's university, with the documents being held in a locked filing cabinet during and after the completion of data entry. Explanation of those procedures was clearly provided in the introductory letter (Appendix 2) accompanying the surveys, and during the time when the researcher made personal contact with the participants involved in the investigation, prior to the commencement of the study.

Guidelines for Survey Construction

In relation to guidelines for survey design, there was an ample amount of expert advice available in the literature (Herzog, 1996; Burns, 1997; Tuckman, 1994; Gay, 1996). For the purposes of this study, many aspects were considered in the development of the survey questionnaire. The main factors considered for the survey instrument related to the type of scales to be used, the design factors related to the instructions used, the nature of questions and statements used, as well as categories within data being sought.

A variety of sources, including personal discussion and published work, were utilised in developing the questionnaires for school principals and early childhood

leaders and classroom teachers. Figure 1, below, depicts the key components considered in the development of the survey tool.

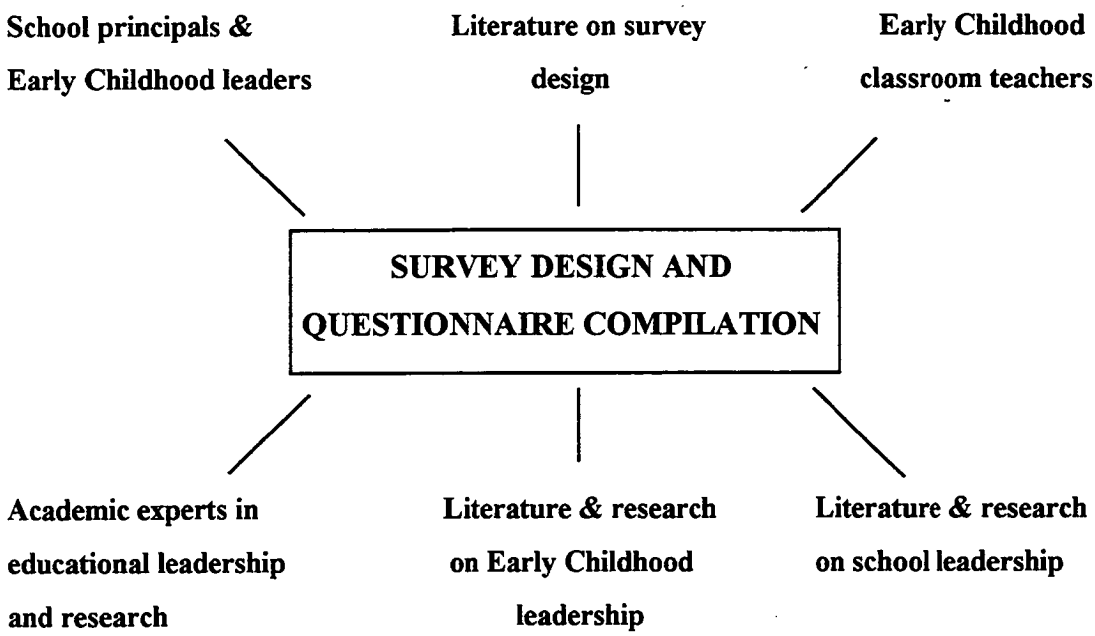

Figure 1. Components considered in the development of the survey instrument

Informational sources accessed included recent literature concerning key aspects of quality leadership for schools (including, amongst others, Anderson, 1998; Blase & Blase, 1997; Goldring & Rallis, 1993; Hurty, 1995; Macbeath et al., 1996; Sergiovanni, 1996; Shakeshaft, 1995) and early childhood education (including Ebbeck, 1992; Rodd, 1994; Stamopoulos, 1998). Reference was also made to research studies related to educational leadership, with key documents utilised encompassing instruments developed by Mulford (1997), Leithwood and Aitken (1995), Grady et al. (1994) and that used for the Assisted School Self Review Process (Department of Education, Training, Community and Cultural Development, 1997-98).

The researcher also made informal contact with practising early childhood classroom teachers, senior staff members, and school principals, who were not involved in the research sample population, in order to ascertain their perceptions of the key aspects of leadership in early childhood education. This was to ensure that no vital areas were overlooked in the survey design. Regular contact was also maintained with academic staff involved in educational leadership and research throughout the survey development and refinement stages. This ongoing dialogue, concerning the content and structure of the surveys, assisted with optimisation of the survey design.

One key rule for designing successful surveys is the need for absolute clarity of meaning in the wording of questions. Guidance on this aspect was taken from Herzog, who claims that clarity of meaning can be achieved by using specific words, rather than generalised terms as "any word or phrase that respondents cannot understand will produce 'noise' in the responses" (1996, p.116). This ultimately results in respondents trying to anticipate the surveys' requirements. Such situations provide the potential for inappropriate responses, which can introduce unintended variance during data analysis. Consequently, with the intended audiences clearly in mind, the simplest language was used in the surveys.

For this study, two surveys were required. The first was designed for completion by school leaders involved in K-2 education and the second for the early childhood teachers within the target schools. In both surveys, the same early childhood leadership factors were considered, with wording variations appropriate to the target populations.

Designing the questionnaires was considered highly important. Attention was given to the appearance, the ease of response, clarity and conciseness of the items and

information provided. Notice was taken of Burns' advice that "a well-planned and carefully constructed questionnaire will increase the response rate and also greatly facilitate the summarisation and analysis of the collected data" (1997, p. 475). Questions were clearly spaced and instructions were designed to be concise yet well defined. One aspect, raised by Burns (1997), and seen by the researcher as important, related to avoiding the use of the words *checklist* or *questionnaire* in the survey. This advice was heeded, as Burns (1997) contends that some people are prejudiced against these words and such prejudice may have an effect upon the validity of their responses.

Each survey comprised an introductory cover letter and three ordered parts: demographic questions, open-ended questions with a focus upon the concerns of the study, and scaled-item statements. With this form of presentation, it was believed that respondents would feel less threatened by first answering demographic questions, which usually do not offend (May, 1997; Burns, 1997). It was decided to complete the introductions in the form of a personal letter on official University School of Education letterhead (Appendix 2), which is recommended by Burns (1997) as being likely to have a positive effect upon the return rate of surveys.

Survey Items: Types and Content

For the purposes of this study, it was considered that use of a variety of data gathering techniques was important and the type and depth of information required in the study also demanded that a variety of methods be used. It was decided that selection of question types should include closed, open-ended, and scaled-items to allow for the gathering of demographic, perceptual and factual information. The three forms of questions used are now explained in more detail.

Closed Questions

In the survey, the closed items were included for the purpose of gathering demographic data (which was seen as important for defining any trends which may be identified during the data analysis process) and to allow sub-groups to be discussed within the selected population (Gay, 1996). These closed items required participants to choose responses to each question from two or more fixed alternatives. Questions included in this section related to leadership and teaching experience in early childhood, types of formal qualifications, areas of teaching training specialisation, school types, and present teaching classifications. Another closed question related to the gender of the respondent. Initially, it was thought that this information was unnecessary. However, upon reflection of the findings from the literature search on leadership in schools, the differences between male and female leaders were highlighted by many writers and researchers (Porter, 1995; Shakeshaft, 1995; Rodd, 1994; Ozga, 1993; Fullan, 1991). For this reason the inclusion of the item seeking identification of gender was considered to be information which could reveal trends peculiar to male or female leaders.

The advantage of including closed questions in the data gathering survey lay in the ease of measurement of responses within a defined range of options, which also facilitated easier coding of the received data (Burns, 1997; Slavin, 1992). The disadvantage inherent in using closed items was considered to be the fact that some respondents may not find a suitable response within the stated alternatives. For this reason, in questions related to teaching specialisation, teaching classification and formal qualifications, which may have produced alternative responses, an added box was included to allow respondents to specify their own reply.

Open-Ended Items

Open-ended items were also included in the survey to allow respondents greater freedom to make responses, enabling them to present their own perspectives without restraint. In this regard, Burns' view was acknowledged, in that open-ended questions can result in "unexpected or unanticipated answers which may suggest hitherto unthought-of relationships or hypotheses" (1997, p. 473). Open-ended questions were seen as having the potential of providing rich and honest data, and at the same time allowing for flexibility in responses. It was acknowledged that open-ended questions are difficult to code and are disliked by many respondents as they take a longer time to complete (Slavin, 1992). However, it was thought that the quality of information received through this means would be of a more complex nature than that collected by other survey methods.

In the main, the content of the open-ended questions in the surveys was governed by previous readings related to school and early childhood leadership. The open-ended questions sought to gain responses related to key aspects which recent researchers and writers had highlighted as indicators of effective school leadership. Therefore, it was decided to seek the respondents' views on the perceived leadership strengths and weaknesses of early childhood leaders and school principals. Other items which were included sought to clarify the perceived challenges for early childhood leaders today, as well as establishing the perceived level of technical knowledge held by school leaders in relation to early childhood education. This technical knowledge has been highlighted as being of paramount importance for effective leadership (Leithwood, Begley, et al., 1994; Rodd, 1994). Subsequently, it was decided to seek respondents' views on the perceived impact which the leaders'

levels of technical knowledge had when they were attending to early childhood teachers' professional needs and the educational offerings for early childhood children. Leading questions were not used as these were seen as being a source of unreliable data, as respondents usually respond in a manner that they believe the researcher wants (May, 1997).

Scaled Items

The third form of data gathering employed scaled items. This form of measurement was seen to allow respondents the opportunity of indicating their level of agreement with a specific statement, according to a fixed scale. One section of the survey was designed to gain a measure of the respondents' agreement with a number of statements concerning early childhood leadership, as perceived in their schools and as they believed the ideal situation should be. The Likert method was considered the most appropriate tool for this purpose, where respondents were asked to rank each presented statement along a five-point scale, ranging through *'all the time', 'most of the time', 'some of the time', 'not often', 'never'*. Use of an actual and ideal Likert scale has been used successfully before by a number of researchers (Fisher & Fraser, 1990; Stoll & Fink, 1988), and the researcher believed that this had the potential to produce interesting data regarding which leadership aspects the respondents believed require greatest attention. Consideration was given to including an *undecided* or *unsure* category but this was decided against to avoid "fence sitting" by respondents, which can lead to response bias (Tuckman, 1994). As the Likert Scale is an ordinal scale which can be based on "empirical data, rather than subjective opinions of judges" (Burns 1997 p. 461), it was believed that validity and reliability of data would be enhanced.

A second section was included in the scaled items, which required respondents to rank statements concerning the five most important leadership factors for a school leader who is responsible for early childhood education. Thirteen statements were included in the selection, with the opportunity being provided for respondents to include any other aspect which had been omitted. In seeking participants to indicate their order of preference among the thirteen (or fourteen) options, the scale employed was *one* representing the most important factor through to *five* representing the fifth most important leadership factor. Inclusion of these ranked statements was seen as a means of obtaining an overall rank order of key aspects of leadership for early childhood education (Burns, 1997).

Many researchers and writers (Slavin, 1992; Tuckman, 1994; Burns, 1997) contend that it is advisable to use well-established, or previously tested, questionnaire items and scales. However, although there is much written in relation to school principals and their leadership, little suitable information specifically related to early childhood leaders is available. Key survey tools and related summaries pertaining to school leadership, which were utilised for this study, included Leithwood and Aitken's (1995) survey of school leadership from the Canadian project entitled, *Making Schools Smarter,* Grady and others' (1994) survey *The Australian School Principals: Profile 1994,* the surveys included in *Assisted School Self Review Process,* currently being used in Tasmanian schools involved in the self-review process, and Mulford's Leadership, Organisational Learning and Student Outcomes Project (1997).

Leithwood and Aitken's (1995) questionnaire for school management and leadership appeared to encapsulate many of the key aspects highlighted by other leadership writings, research and surveys. It was decided that their sub-sections for

leadership would form a sound foundation for considering the categorisation of the questions, which were seen as important for inclusion. The categories provided by Leithwood and Aitken (1995) were:

- provides a vision and/or inspiration,
- models behaviour,
- provides individualised support,
- provides intellectual stimulation,
- fosters commitment to group goals,
- encourages high performance,
- provides contingent rewards,
- encourages individual improvement.

This list appeared rather long and exhaustive and it was decided, in consideration of the key aspects found within pertinent literature and research on school leadership, that the following content categories would prove more suitable for this study. The four content categories selected were as follows:

- visionary and team building aspects,
- school and community relationships,
- instructional leadership,
- high expectations.

Key aspects of school leadership were seen to belong within each of these categories. The visionary and team building category included shared decision making and leadership, commitment to shared goals, and innovative and consultative

leadership practices. The second category, related to school and community building, included high level interpersonal and communication skills, pastoral care of all school personnel and leading by example. Instructional leadership, the third category, included exemplary pedagogical skills and technical knowledge, facilitation of professional development opportunities for self and others and promotion of reflective practices in teaching and learning. The fourth category related to high expectations, and aspects here included encouraging and recognising efforts of others and demonstrating and encouraging high professional performance in self and others. Current research and literature on leadership, as cited previously, show clear links with these four categories and therefore support their selection for use in the survey.

The content categories in the scaled section of the surveys, for the school leaders and teachers, (Appendix 3) contained a total of 56 items, with between 10 – 16 statements for each category. Some items were designed to appear in this section to address the same leadership factors with different wording. The following items were designed for this purpose as a means of cross checking responses. These items were 47 and 56; 1 and 31; 9 and 54; 40 and 4; 42 and 44. Negatively worded statements were also included, where a response of *'never'* or *'not often'* was seen as positive and where *always* or *most of the time* would be considered as negative. These items were 3, 28, 35, 43, 45, 48, 49, 52 and 56. This reversing of the approach of some items was included to check for, and protect against, respondents simply selecting the same response for all statements. This can often occur due to boredom or disinterest in the survey being completed (Tuckman, 1994).

To determine the order of presentation of the statements on the survey instrument, the statements in the four categories were listed in order and numbered from 1 to 56. Each statement was then allocated a value that was randomly generated

by a PC- based spreadsheet application. The statements were then re-listed in ascending order of their randomly generated value, this being the order in which they appeared in the survey document.

The scaled questionnaire for early childhood teachers, which they had to complete in consideration of their most senior early childhood staff member, was designed with the same statement content as for the leaders' instrument, with wording changes to approach the statements from teachers' perspectives. However, in relation to gathering early childhood teachers' perceptions of their school principal's leadership role in early childhood education, a shorter version, comprising 17 of the original 56 items used for the early childhood senior staff members, was utilised. This modification was made following informal discussions with early childhood classroom teachers and during a pre-testing situation when two early childhood teachers, not involved in the study, completed the draft survey. Pre-testing highlighted the time demands involved with completion of full surveys for both the school principal and the early childhood senior staff member. The proposed total of 112 scaled items (or 224 items if actual and ideal perceptions are taken as two separate entities) would have proved to be a considerable invasion of the classroom teachers' valuable time, totalling around 50 minutes. The researcher considered this time-frame quite unacceptable and therefore, after feedback discussions with these classroom teachers, it was decided that a modified, shortened version would be used. In this way it was hoped to keep the completion time for the survey to around 25 minutes. The most important 17 items for the principal's survey were selected as 5 questions from each of the first 3 sub-sets, (leadership vision and team building, school and community relationships and instructional leadership) and then 2 questions from the last sub-set (leadership for high performance).

The selection process for these 17 items was completed in a considered manner by inclusion of central themes from each sub-set. In the leadership vision and team building section, the key themes of shared leadership and decision making processes were included, whilst in the school and community sub-set the selected items related to leading by example and the level of interpersonal and communication skills evident in the leadership provided. The third sub-set, on instructional leadership, covered the areas of technical knowledge and expertise in the leadership, whilst the fourth sub-set, on leadership for high performance, included aspects of recognition and support for teachers to enable achievement of a high standard of educational provision for their early childhood classes.

Pilot Testing of the Survey

It was considered highly desirable to pilot test the study's questionnaires, to allow for assessment and refinement of the instruments prior to the major implementation procedure. In addition, it was seen as an attempt to remove ambiguity and to test response categories (Burns, 1997), as well as assisting in identifying problems of clarity in the wording of questions and identifying any omissions or the likelihood of any unanticipated answers (Anderson, 1990). Tuckman's (1994) advice on using a group of respondents from the test population, who will not be involved in the final study, was taken. Subsequently, the pilot surveys (one for school leaders {Appendix 4} and one for teachers {Appendix 5}) were conducted with school principals, early childhood senior staff (n=3) and teachers (n=11) from two Tasmanian schools, as well as three extra senior staff members from other schools, within the same two districts as those of the target population.

Inclusion of the additional senior staff members was considered important to enable gathering of sufficient responses for the leader's survey.

An official letter (Appendix 2), a feedback letter (Appendix 6) and sheet (Appendix 7) were designed and attached to the pilot study surveys. The letter expressed sincere thanks for participation in the pilot phase of the study. It also requested respondents' contributions, which were anticipated would identify any modifications necessary in the instruments to maximise their user-friendliness and pertinence to school leaders and teachers in the early childhood area of the school. On the feedback sheet, respondents were asked to provide information related to the following aspects: how the questions could be improved, issues requiring further emphasis, aspects which were difficult to understand, suggested improvements to the instructions, any other helpful suggestions and a record of time taken to complete the survey (May 1997, p. 93). Complementing this, as participants answered the questions, they were encouraged to make comments next to the question concerned (Anderson 1990), relating to any uncertainties or concerns that arose during the completion of the survey. The completed questionnaires were then collected and all comments were collated and reviewed.

Feedback Received from the Pilot Study

As a result of conducting the pilot studies it was possible to "revise the layout, question wording and design, to take account of any criticisms and problems" (May 1997, 93), prior to the full-scale study being undertaken. Respondents involved in the pilot study raised a variety of minor issues. Suggested modifications and aspects for consideration have been collated, in relation to the two survey instruments, for the school leaders (Appendix 8) and the early childhood teachers (Appendix 9).

Feedback on the School Leader's Survey

One aspect of the school leaders' comments, regarding the survey pertained to improvements which could be made. A main concern related to the inclusion of negative statements in the scaled component of the survey. These questions were described as 'distracting' and 'difficult to slot into options'. However, as one of these respondents commented, it was understood that it was important for validity reasons to include items such as these. Another concern was raised by a school leader, who stated that it is 'really hard to say you do something *all the time*'. This referred to the use of *'all the time'*, *'most of the time'*, *'some of the time'*, *'not often'*, *'not at all'* as options for the scaled instrument. On this theme, two respondents commented that it would have been easier to answer some of the items if the response options had been *'strongly agree'*, *'agree'*, *'disagree'*, and *'strongly disagree'*.

Aspects, which some of the school leaders believed, required greater emphases, related to the concept of shared leadership. It was pointed out by one leader that, in smaller schools, the importance of team-based leadership is of paramount concern. It was suggested that the survey needed to be strengthened in this regard. Further emphasis was thought to be needed, in relation to the explicit inclusion of the term Kindergarten, in the survey, as 'it is a specialist area, whereas leadership positions in primary schools are more generic' in nature. Two leaders suggested the inclusion of a section where leaders could list their primary leadership tasks. This was seen by one leader as enabling respondents to 'feel more comfortable in replying to some questions'. Finally, one leader commented that the cultural aspects of the study could be strengthened, although no examples were provided.

The school leaders highlighted no problems with understanding survey instructions and content. In regard to the instructions, one leader commented on the use of the words *'commands respect'* and suggested using *'earns respect'* instead. Another comment was received, concerning question 22 in the scaled instrument, where it says *'provides extended training'*, with a modification suggested as *'facilitates extended training'*. In relation to question 41, one leader commented that it was inappropriate to respond with *'all the time'* to the statement *'I regularly praise efforts of early childhood students'*. The ranking of the items, related to important leadership factors, was perceived by one school leader to be 'a particularly difficult task'.

The section on *'anything else you believe might be helpful'* elicited one response from the leaders. This comment related to the need for school leaders to be able to record the amount of time they allocated to the early childhood area of the school within their overall leadership duties. The responses received, regarding the time taken by the school leaders to complete the survey, were highly varied. Times varied from twenty to forty five minutes. However, it was noted that the longer times related closely to those respondents who had made extensive comments on the survey design and content.

Feedback on the Teacher's Survey

One improvement suggested by a teacher related to use of the term *'early childhood senior staff'*. It was pointed out that smaller schools, and even some larger ones, often do not have a designated senior staff member with sole responsibility for the early childhood area of the school, as "AST2's and 3's and AP's are expected to be K-6 leaders".

It was thought that further emphasis was needed regarding shared leadership. One teacher responded "perhaps allow for the fact that classroom teachers may take on leadership roles within early childhood and ask some questions pertaining to this". There were no responses to the category of *'I didn't understand'*.

Several suggestions were made regarding the instructions. One teacher sought clarification on what was meant by *'most senior early childhood member'*, whilst another suggested the inclusion of AST 1 into the section on background information for leaders, as it was highlighted that in smaller schools "we share senior roles". Another person suggested that the terms *'all the time'* and *'most of the time'*, in the scaled instrument, could be joined together as 'often', as it was hard to answer some of the questions using the defined categories.

The time taken by teachers to complete the survey was fairly uniform. Teachers who wrote many comments took approximately 30 minutes to complete the survey, whilst those with fewer additions consistently took 20 minutes.

The value of undertaking a pilot for a study of this type cannot be underestimated, as the nature and diversity of the feedback provided can only enhance the overall research process.

Modifying the Questions

Following the receipt and collation of the feedback from the pilot study participants, decisions were made regarding changes deemed to be necessary, in relation to both school leaders' and early childhood teachers' surveys. The modifications decided upon in relation to both surveys were as follows. In the scaled instrument, the rating scale of *'all the time'*, *'most of the time'*, *'some of the time'*, *'not often'* and *'not at all'* was changed to *'strongly agree'*, *'agree'*, *'disagree'* and

'strongly disagree', as suggested by one respondent. It was considered that the point raised about leaders not being able to do some things all the time was most valid. This rating aspect had been a matter of concern for many respondents, in both groups, and as it required only minor modifications to the statements used, this was seen as a potential positive change. Changing the ratings to *'strongly agree'*, *'agree'*, *'disagree'* and *'strongly disagree'* also overcame the perceived difficulty in answering question 41 expressed by one person. The comments regarding use of negative items were noted and understood, however for reasons pertaining to validity these were still included.

Another key issue, raised by both pilot study groups, related to the notion of shared leadership in schools. The teachers' pointers, on including a category for AST 1 and classroom teacher in the section requiring demographic information related to school leaders, was seen as highly appropriate and was subsequently changed. This change was considered to address the issue of who is a senior staff member in the K-2 area of smaller schools. The need to include a section, to recognise the role early childhood teachers involved in leadership within the K-2 area of the school undertake, was also noted. For this purpose, an entirely new question was included in both surveys, where respondents were asked to identify the three most influential leadership sources in their present school, where the ranking scale employed was *1-very strong, 2– considerable, 3–moderate.* The leadership sources provided for consideration were Principal, Assistant Principal, Advanced Skills Teachers 1, 2 and 3, teams of teachers and individual classroom teachers. In this way, it was considered that school leaders and teachers could identify which leadership sources provided the most influence within their current school, thus addressing the relevant concerns expressed by some respondents.

The issue raised by a couple of respondents, concerning the notion of leadership in primary schools being a Kindergarten to Grade 6 role, was noted, as was the comment concerning the specialised nature of leadership within the Kindergarten area. Some responses, especially by teachers, indicated that isolating the first four years of schooling under the umbrella term of 'early childhood' caused some problems. Subsequently, it was decided that in both the surveys, the term 'early childhood' would be substituted with 'Kindergarten to Grade 2 [K-2]' or the 'early years of schooling'. These terms are both utilised, and recognised, as appropriate in the latest Department of Education policies and documents, with very limited reference being made to the term 'early childhood'. In this way it was seen that the language in the survey would be compatible with that currently being encountered and utilised by teachers and senior staff.

The request, by two of the school leaders, to be able to list their primary leadership tasks, within their current school, was considered to be a worthwhile addition. A question seeking the key leadership tasks undertaken by the principal was included in both the leaders' and teachers' surveys. Data obtained from this source were seen as having the potential to support information gained from the ranking scale statements, which sought to identify the five most important leadership factors of a leader in the early childhood area.

The issue raised by one school leader, regarding the need to strengthen the cultural aspects of the surveys, was given due consideration, but it was decided that enough emphasis was already being placed on this aspect of leadership, under the question category of 'school and community relationships' with seventeen questions being designated in that category.

The suggestions provided, regarding the wording of the statements *'commands respect'* and *'provides extended training'* resulted in respective alterations to *'earns the respect of'* and *'facilitates extended training'* as both were thought to be highly appropriate modifications. The ranking of the five most important leadership factors for early childhood education, seen by one respondent as 'a particularly difficult task', was further considered. However, no changes were seen to be appropriate in this regard, which would enhance the quality of the information gained or make the task of the respondent any easier. As only one respondent had highlighted this as a concern it was decided to retain this component in its original form.

Two issues raised by respondents were considered next. One aspect, raised by a teacher regarding clarification of what was meant by *'most senior early childhood member'*, and the issue of shared leadership roles currently occurring in smaller schools necessitated changes within the teacher's questionnaire. It was considered necessary to add an extra question to this survey. The new question requested that the teacher identify the person *'with whom you have most contact regarding leadership issues, problems and/or decisions in K-2'*. The wording of following questions in the instrument was subsequently changed from *'most senior early childhood member'* to *'the person with whom you have most contact'* to accommodate this change. This alteration in defining the early childhood leadership role meant that classroom teachers, as well as senior staff members, could be identified as school leaders in K-2. Furthermore, it was considered necessary to include another question seeking teachers to provide reasons why they turned to this person for leadership and support in K-2 matters. In this way, it was anticipated that teachers, particularly those in smaller schools, would feel that they were being valued as leaders within their area of expertise.

The time required for completion of the surveys was seen as an area that needed to be amended within the covering letter. The leaders' survey appeared to require about twenty minutes to complete, when no additional comments were made. However, it was decided to advise that the teachers would probably require 25 minutes to complete their survey.

One final alteration was made to the surveys as it was thought that the scene could be set more effectively for participants. The alteration involved inclusion of an introductory paragraph, prior to the first question to be answered in both surveys. The paragraph highlighted the extensive changes that have occurred, in relation to the evolving nature of leadership in the first four years of schooling, over the past decade in Tasmanian schools. The limited nature of research undertaken in this regard, both here and overseas was raised, as was the aim of the study. It was pointed out that the study was designed to gain improved understanding of the leadership issue in Tasmanian schools, which ultimately could provide valuable insights for others interested in enhancing leadership for K-2 teachers and students. Through this introductory paragraph, it was hoped that surveyed school leaders and teachers would be motivated to respond to assist in this worthwhile research study.

Subsequently, the completed pilot questionnaires were then re-edited and changes were made, as discussed above, to address the suggested comments, which were deemed of importance to the enhancement of the instrument. The final drafts of the surveys are presented in Appendix 8 (Leaders' Survey) and Appendix 9 (Teachers' Survey).

Upon completion of the modification process, undertaken after the pilot study, the researcher investigated having the two survey documents computer-generated. This decision was made to ensure that the surveys were professionally presented, as

this has been known to improve the response rate of the surveys (Burns, 1997). The researcher considered that the personnel, involved in computer-based generation of surveys, had broad experience in questionnaire design, which would optimise the survey instruments' presentation, and hence the return rate. However, quotations for printing of the surveys in the most effective format indicated that the cost involved was well beyond the budgetary constraints of the study. Cheaper, computer-based forms of the survey instruments were available. However, in the writer's opinion, these were not well formatted, making them more complex to complete by respondents, which may have had adverse effects upon the reliability of the data gathered.

The researcher investigated other means of producing satisfactory survey instruments and decided to have the word-processed surveys scanned and then laser printed. It was considered that this would maximise the clarity and appearance of the final documents, which were then produced using this method by a local commercial printer. Upon the recommendation of the printer's business consultant, the two instruments were printed on different coloured paper to assist in identifying and sorting completed surveys.

When received from the printers, the survey document covers were sequentially numbered, 1 to 60 for the leaders and 1 to 250 for the teachers, as recommended by Burns (1997). This procedure was utilised to enable a record to be kept of the surveys provided at each school, which then informed the follow-up procedure by indicating how many responses were gained from each school. The survey instruments were prepared for delivery with an accompanying cover letter (Appendix 2) printed on official university letterhead and a reply-paid, pre-addressed envelope for return of the completed survey (Burns, 1997).

Data Collection: Administration of the Surveys

Informal approval was sought and received from the district superintendents of the two selected school districts involved in the study, which was followed up with a letter to them confirming the precise details of the study (Appendix 10). The letter was forwarded once approval for the study was gained from the University Ethics Committee. Upon receipt of official approval from the Department of Education, the researcher made verbal contact with the principal of each target school. Twenty nine principals (of the twenty nine schools selected and contacted) gave permission for the study to be conducted in their schools. One principal was not available for phone contact at the various times that the researcher rang over a period of three weeks and failed to respond to the messages left. As the delivery stage of the survey process was almost complete by this time, it was decided not to approach a replacement school at the late stage of the school year. The other principal declined participation at an early stage, on behalf of teachers at the school, as they did not wish to be involved. Another school of similar size and location was selected and permission for involvement sought from the principal. Agreement to participate was indicated, resulting in final involvement of 29 schools in the study.

This personal contact with each of the selected schools, prior to the delivery of the surveys, was undertaken by the researcher to foster establishment of a positive relationship with school personnel. During initial contact with each school's principal, the research project's key intentions, and anticipated value for early childhood education, were shared. In most cases, a date for personal delivery of the surveys, by the researcher, was agreed with the school principal. This personal contact was made in anticipation that the response rate for the survey would be enhanced, as a major

factor affecting survey return has been found to be related to the type and quality of contact between the researcher and potential respondents (Herzog, 1996).

Once their initial approval had been gained, a few school principals suggested that contact should be made with the senior staff member with responsibility for K-2 education in their schools. This advice was followed by the researcher with appropriate delivery of the survey instruments being negotiated with these senior staff members.

Five principals indicated that they believed that it was unnecessary for the surveys to be personally delivered. Therefore, surveys were posted to their schools with an accompanying fact sheet related to the study (Appendix 11) to assist principals with responding to staff queries concerning the research.

Over the ensuing four weeks, in October and early November, the researcher visited all remaining schools. Personal contact was made with as many teachers and senior staff as possible during these visits, with recess, lunch and after-school times being utilised for this purpose. At twelve of the schools, the principal and/or senior staff member spent between five and thirty minutes with the researcher before indicating that they would distribute the survey instruments to the appropriate staff members. The researcher agreed to this means of distribution, while being aware that it may compromise the return rate from these schools with others 'selling' the benefits of completion and return of the surveys. Two of these principals stressed that they couldn't guarantee high return rates as teachers were stressed and tired. The researcher accepted this comment, once again being cognisant that the return rate from these schools may well be poor.

Over a four week period, a steady stream of completed surveys were returned to the researcher. As planned, a follow-up procedure was conducted. Two weeks

after delivery/posting of the surveys, a simple reminder letter (Appendix 12) was sent to the designated contact person for the school. It was anticipated that this would prompt any interested respondents who had "put off" completing the survey. After a further two weeks had passed, a final follow-up was initiated, which involved posting out an informal greeting note (Appendix 13) to each school. This note reminded respondents of the importance of their participation in the study in order to provide the broadest possible data base. These follow-ups resulted in continuing return of completed forms. The posting of the final notes was late in the school year and, as anticipated because of the generally busy nature of this time of the year, resulted in the return of only a few completed surveys.

During the data collection phase, the researcher was contacted by a senior staff leader from one target school, who indicated that teachers in that school were reluctant to complete the survey because they considered that anonymity could not be guaranteed. The senior staff member believed that this concern arose from another survey, in which the staff had been involved, where serious confidentiality breaches had occurred. The researcher accepted the position at the school, reiterating to the leader that confidentiality of individual responses was assured but emphasising that involvement was totally voluntary if potential respondents had any concerns.

Following amendment of the number of survey instruments delivered to each school to compensate for staffing and leadership number variations, compared to the approximations supplied by District officers, a total of 217 teacher surveys and 57 leader surveys were distributed to potential respondents in the target schools.

The data collection phase was completed in a satisfactory manner, over a period of ten weeks. The researcher was keenly aware that the return rate of the surveys, during the final two to three weeks of data collection, may well have been adversely

affected by the routine, end-of-year demands upon teachers and school leaders, which are renowned for being extreme during the month of December.

Analysis of Gathered Data

"The purpose of analysing the data is to find meaning in the data and it is done by systematically arranging and presenting the information which has to be organised so that comparisons, contrasts and insights can be made and demonstrated" contends Burns (1997, p. 338). Analysis of the data is a vitally important phase of any study and regardless of how efficiently the research has been conducted up to the analysis phase, "inappropriate analyses can lead to inappropriate conclusions" (Gay 1996, p. 416).

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) explain that data analysis is concerned with organising and working with the data gathered to "create explanations, pose hypotheses, develop theories and link your story to other stories" (p. 127). This entails processes of categorising, synthesising, pattern searching, and interpretation of the data collected (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Therefore, it was acknowledged that the aim of analysing survey data was to "examine patterns among replies to questions and to explore the relationships between variables that the questions represent" (May 1997, p. 102). Although this process of analysis has been conducted historically using pen and paper to complete calculations (Rose & Sullivan, 1996), the more productive, time effective, and efficient method used by researchers today involves the use of computers. The utilisation of software packages to analyse data gathered in this study seemed to be expedient. Rose and Sullivan (1996) comment that computers have the capacity to calculate "at immense speed using huge amounts of data" (p. 37). However, in order to take full advantage

of the computer's capabilities, data acquired from the surveys needed to be collated in a form which was suited to rapid, accurate entry into the computer. This involves "moving from questionnaire design to the collation of data in a form suitable for entry into, and analysis by, a computer" (Rose & Sullivan 1996, p. 37). A computer has the capacity to take most of the 'drudgery' out of data analysis (Krathwohl, 1997).

For the purpose of this study, it was decided to enter the data into a series of Excel spreadsheets, where it could be manipulated ready for analysis. This spreadsheet application was particularly suited for use with direct entry of data from the closed question sections of the surveys, but was also suitable for recording qualitative data gathered from the open-ended questions following coding of responses (Rose & Sullivan, 1996). As Glesne and Peshkin (1992) observe, computers have the advantage of forcing the researcher to organise and plan their data analysis in a systematic way. As the computer has the capability to sort, count and display data (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992), its use was well suited to analysing data obtained from the survey.

Nominal measurement "is a classification system that categorizes variables into subclasses" (Weinbach & Grinnell 1995, p. 10), with Fink (1995) observing that nominal scales are sometimes called "categorical scales" (p. 4). This type of classification was to be used for demographic data gathered in the study's surveys. This data related to gender, level of qualifications, school type, leadership level, and specialisation undertaken in training. Gay (1996) observes that this type of types of data such as these are true categories, into which people fall, independent of the study. Although nominal scales provide the lowest level of measurement (Gay, 1996), they are usually a necessary part of any study.

The scaled statements in the surveys required ordinal processes to be utilised for measurement and recording of the data. Ordinal measurement allows the data to not only be classified into categories, but ranked in order within the categories according to the importance placed upon it by the respondents. As ordinal measurement is typically utilised for rating the quality and agreement of factors (Fink, 1995), its use was well suited to analysis of the data from the surveys' scaled items. The three scaled items in the surveys were:

- the Likert Scale statements where respondents were required to rank items concerning the nature of K-2 leadership on a four point scale,
- the rating of the five most important leadership factors in K-2 leadership, and
- the rating of the three most influential leadership sources in their schools.

It was noted that ordinal scales such as these can be assigned numerical values, enabling average values to be computed for the data so that "the data yield useful generalizations when interpreted" according to Krathwohl (1997, p. 391).

Coding: a Means of Understanding Raw Data

As briefly mentioned earlier, analysis of the qualitative data obtained from responses to the open-ended questions in the surveys required a different approach. With the diversity of responses concerning the strengths and weaknesses of school leaders, challenges for K-2 leaders, impact of the lack of specific early childhood training, primary tasks of K-2 leaders, and reasons for teachers selecting a specific support person, it was necessary to utilise a more complex analytical approach based upon coding of responses. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) describe coding as an ongoing process of sorting and defining data. It was planned that the researcher would

personally undertake analysis of the open-ended responses, coding the data received. Analysis of the content of the responses was to be undertaken in a systematic manner to enable the collected data to be classified "into themes, issues, topics, concepts, propositions" (Burns 1997, p. 339). Compilation of this data was not designed to simply count the occurrences of items, but rather to "permit analysis and comparison of meanings within a category" (Burns 1997, p. 338). The researcher was aware that this would necessitate considerable reading, and re-reading, of responses and that coding would need to relate directly to the stated hypotheses and research questions. It was necessary for the researcher to develop and refine an appropriate coding procedure (Gay, 1996) for this purpose, which requires "extensive work on the researcher's part" (Burns 1997, p. 409).

The codes developed for each question needed to be "exhaustive of the response range but mutually exclusive" (Krathwohl 1997, p. 370), so that a given response would always carry the same code. Consistency is seen as vital in coding (Krathwohl, 1997). It was decided that it would be appropriate to accept multiple responses to open-ended questions to allow all issues to be recorded (Krathwohl, 1997). Guidance was sought, from the literature, concerning the types of codes which could be utilised. Bogdan and Biklen (1992), in Krathwohl (1997), suggest that there are ten generic codes that can be used to focus the process of coding of raw data. For the purpose of this study, four of the generic codes appeared appropriate. The first code related to "the subject's way of thinking about people and objects" (Krathwohl 1997, p. 313) in making meaning of occurrences in their world. The second appropriate code type related to the selection of "activity codes" (Krathwohl, 1997), noted as being useful in clarifying regularly occurring behaviours. The third generic code, related to interpersonal relationships and defined by Krathwohl (1997,

p. 313) as "Relationships and Social Structure Codes", was seen as being vital to this study. The fourth code, seen as being appropriate to this study, related to "perspectives held by subjects: ways of thinking shared by subjects ... to capture shared understanding" (Krathwohl 1997, p. 313). These four generic code groups were utilised as the basis for the study's processes for the coding of qualitative data.

Subsequently, with these generic codes in mind, the coding of responses commenced with the researcher seeking repetitions and relationships (Krathwohl, 1997) within the data. Initial themes were identified by the time that the researcher had read approximately 30 responses to the first question under review. As Krathwohl (1997) suggested would happen, categories within the key themes evolved and developed as coding proceeded. Occasionally, codes which initially appeared important assumed lesser significance as a greater proportion of responses was analysed. According to Krathwohl (1997), this progression provides researchers with "well-grounded codes" (p. 313).

When coding of the first set of responses into themes (each with sub-categories describing key issues) had been completed, the results were reviewed to identify and amend overlaps and redundant areas. This stage allowed for final refinement of the codes utilised for recording of the data for the particular question under review.

The coding process undertaken corresponds closely with that recommended by Krathwohl (1997), who suggests establishing rough codes, searching for commonalities in the data, defining finer coding options, and refining the final codes to reflect key aspects of the research. In this study, little refining of the final codes was necessary, being simply a case of rewording the code categories to clearly capture the perceptions contained in the responses. Utilisation of this coding process allowed the qualitative data contained in survey responses to open-ended questions to be

recorded in a manner which allowed comparative analysis of the data to be performed, providing information vital to the study.

Code Categories Developed for the Study

Analysis of the responses received from both K-2 leaders and teachers, in their respective surveys, provided a variety of key themes and coding categories for each of the open-ended questions. These categories are considered below.

Key Theme	Coding Categories
Impact of change	• Procedural/accountability • Resourcing • Educational • Teachers and students
Impact of parental involvement	• Expectations of parents • Utilisation of parents
Specific knowledge of K-2 issues	• Leaders • Teachers • General 'community' awareness
Relationships in K-2	• Teachers • Students • Parents
Organisational aspects in K-2	• Time • Equity • School requirements • Departmental requirements

Table 1. Themes and Coding Categories for Greatest Challenges for K-2 Leaders

Five key themes, each with a number of coding categories, emerged for Question 2b in each of the surveys, which considered the nature of the challenges for today's leaders of K-2 education. The themes and categories are shown in Table 1.

Question 2c, in both surveys, sought respondents' views on the question "Do you believe a lack of specific EC training limits the effectiveness of a school leader in a K-2 leadership role?" The responses were coded under the two key themes of "Yes" and "No" replies, with the categories in each covering the reasons provided for the response. Table 2 shows the categories which were derived for this question.

Key Theme	**Coding Categories**
"Yes" response	• Need for specific knowledge and understanding • Lack of leadership credibility • Experience
"No" response	• Leaders' ongoing learning capability • Shared leadership • Basic knowledge of child development • Generic leadership skills

Table 2. Coding Categories for Implications of Lack of Specific K-2 Training on K-2 Leadership

Questions 3a and 3b on the leaders' survey, and 3c, 3d, 4f and 4g on the teachers' survey, sought respondents' perceptions on various aspects of leaders' strengths and weaknesses. Four key themes, each with a number of coding categories, were found to relate to all of these questions, due to their common thematic basis. The coding categories for these questions are shown in Table 3.

Key Theme	Coding Categories
Vision and team building	• Energy • Presence • Shared leadership • Equity • Risk taking • Evaluation • Collaboration
School and community relationships	• Parents • Pastoral care • Trust • Reliability • Conflict resolution skills • Interpersonal skills • Accessibility • Consultation • Interest • Support
Instructional issues	• Assistance • Professional development • Knowledge • Feedback • Innovation • Initiative
Performance related issues	• Recognition • Resourcing • High performance issues • Empowerment • Organisational issues • Administrative issues

Table 3. Coding Categories for Perceptions of Leadership Strengths and Weaknesses

The final open-ended questions requiring analysis were 3d in the leaders' survey and 3e in the teachers' survey, which both sought respondents' perceptions of the primary tasks undertaken by principals in relation to leadership of K-2. Analysis of responses to these questions resulted in the formulation of six key themes, each with their own set of coding categories. These categories are shown in Table 4.

Key Theme	**Coding Categories**
Management of programs	• Flying Start • Special needs • Other programs
Management of professional development	• Organisational issues • Leadership of professional development • Assessment of needs
Personnel management	• Teachers • Students • Parents
General school operational management	• Documentation • Resourcing • Delegation of tasks • School 'routines'
Presence	• At school • In the community
School policy management	• Curriculum development • Curriculum implementation • Curriculum evaluation • Other policy issues

Table 4. Coding Categories for Perceptions of Principals' Primary Tasks in K-2 Leadership

After completion of coding for each question, characteristics or behaviours, translated into each of the sub-categories for each theme, which were mentioned in respondents' answers were listed and the number of responses attributed to each of these recorded. These data were retained as a source of information, should any deeper analysis of responses be considered necessary. An example of this further analysis of data, within one theme and for one category is shown in Table 5.

Theme	Coding Category	Characteristic or Behaviour
School & Community Relationships	Interpersonal Skills	• Listens • Approachable • Honest • Easy to talk to

Table 5. Example of further analysis of coded data

Computer-Based Analysis of Data

To maximise the efficiency of analysis of the coded data, recorded in the Excel spreadsheets, another computer-based package, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilised. Rose and Sullivan (1996) comment that SPSS "is the most widely-used statistical analysis package in the social sciences" (p. 61). Conversion of the data files from Excel to SPSS provided the information necessary to enable statistical analysis of the study's data to be performed. Following the conversion of the data to SPSS files, the responses to the 56 scaled statements, in both surveys, were reviewed when the scores of the negatively stated items (Statements 3, 28, 35, 43, 45, 48, 49, 52 and 56) were adjusted. This process was designed to allow more meaningful analysis of the data to occur, by eliminating the

confusion associated with the use of negative scores. This confusion can be particularly invasive when analysis of combined positive and negative statement responses is necessary.

Factor Analysis of the Quantitative Data

Further analysis of the quantitative data was undertaken, using the Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS), to allow examination of the inter-relationships amongst the 56 scaled items in the teachers' and leaders' survey instruments. Weinbach and Grinnell (1995) state that factor analysis is a "mathematically sophisticated form of data reduction" (p. 209). The use of factor analysis, one of the capabilities of SPSS, in this study allowed the 56 survey items to be assimilated into a smaller number, by grouping like variables within the statements. Each group of statements is described as a factor of the data, "which is mathematical expression of the common element in the variables that are combined" (Gall, Borg, & Gall 1996, p. 448). The basis of factor analysis lies in the potential to correlate like responses from one statement to other statements, which is the process performed by SPSS.

In this study, the statements associated with each of the four content categories of the scaled instruments devised by the researcher (Vision and Team Building, School and Community Relationships, Instructional Issues and Performance Related), were subjected to factor analysis as separate groups. A number of factors, or commonalities, were identified within each group of statement items. Consideration of the content of the statements combined into each factor enabled an encompassing descriptive name to be assigned to the grouping.

The factors identified became the dependent variables, which were utilised in the subsequent statistical analysis of the variances in leaders' and teachers' responses within each of the factors. The *t* test was used to statistically analyse the significance of any differences between the mean scores for teachers' responses within each factor. The mean score differences were investigated with respect to the following independent variables:

- teacher's gender, level of qualifications, teaching specialisation, and school type,
- principal's gender, teaching specialisation and school type, and
- most contacted staff member's gender and teaching specialisation,

In a similar manner, the factors identified for the leaders were used as dependent variables when performing the *t* tests to analyse the differences between the mean scores of leaders' responses, in relation to the independent variables of each leader's qualifications, teaching specialisation, type of school, leadership classification and gender.

As Weinbach and Grinnell (1995) indicate, when using a computer to calculate the *t* values in analysis, a value for the probability (p) of the difference being statistically significant, will also be attained. Statistical significance can be claimed if the p value is less than 0.05 (Krathwohl, 1997; Weinbach & Grinnell, 1995), and this guideline was used as the basis for acknowledgement of statistical significance in this study.

SPSS was also utilised to perform the chi-square (x^2) another statistical process, described by Weinbach and Grinnell (1995, p. 108) as "the statistical test of association between variables". These calculated values were used to determine the

statistical significance of any differences established between leaders' and teachers' responses to the 56 scaled statements in the surveys.

Summary

This chapter has outlined the procedures and methods utilised within this study. Key aspects related to the purpose of the study, research design, and permission to undertake the study were presented. Instrumentation procedures were described and consideration was given to reliability and construct validity of the survey. The process involved in piloting the study was examined, with clear directions related to the modifications undertaken in finally designing the surveys. The data collection and recording procedures undertaken were discussed, together with the processes utilised to gain the optimum value from the gathered data. The following chapter provides the details of the results received in the study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this chapter, presentations of the quantitative and qualitative results from the teachers' and K-2 leaders' surveys are provided. These results are presented in the following order:

Quantitative Results from Teachers' Survey Responses

101 teachers returned completed surveys, which represents a 49% response rate. The first section of results to be presented relates to the demographic data received from participating teachers regarding their personal status and position, including level of qualifications, type of specialisation, school type, and their gender.

Teachers' Levels of Qualifications

Information provided by the 99 teachers who responded to this question indicated that, the group possessed a total of 154 qualifications. Figure 2 shows the distribution of these qualifications.

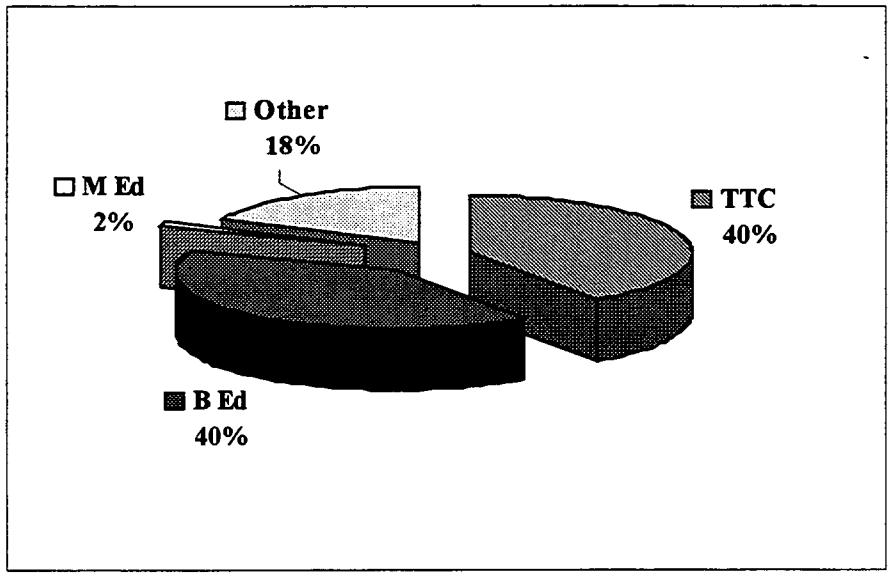

Figure 2. Teachers' qualifications

The data provided indicate that 2% of responding teachers had two degrees, one of which was a Master of Education. 5% of teachers in the sample had three qualifications, a Bachelor of Education, another degree (such a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science), and the Tasmanian Teachers Certificate (TTC) (received after three years of satisfactory teaching within the Department of Education). 29% of respondents had a Bachelor of Education and a TTC and 27% had a Bachelor of Education. 10% of respondents had another type of degree or diploma (other than a Bachelor of Education) and a TTC; 10% had another degree or diploma, other than a Bachelor of Education; and 17% of teachers had a TTC. In the category of other qualifications, teachers indicated they had a variety of degrees and diplomas, including Bachelor of Arts, Diploma of Teaching and Kindergarten Teachers Certificate.

Teachers' Specialisation Type

Teachers' responses to the question on teaching specialisation type are displayed in Figure 3.

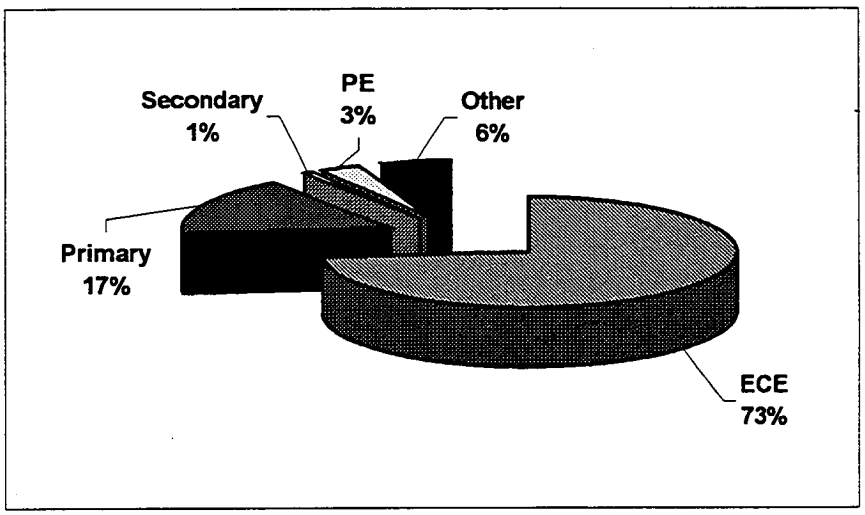

Figure 3. Teachers' specialisation

Responses showed that 73% of the teacher sample population had a specialisation in early childhood, whilst 17% of respondents had a primary specialisation. Another 4% of the teachers surveyed had a specialisation of secondary or physical education, with the remaining 6% of respondents indicating another specialisation., including an arts or science degree.

Teachers' Type of School

Question 1c of the teachers' survey sought clarification on the type of school at which teachers were currently teaching. The two school types involved in the study were district high and primary schools. Of teacher respondents, 88% currently taught at a primary school, whilst 12% were teaching at a district high school location. Figure 4, Teachers' School Type, provides a graphical representation of the data.

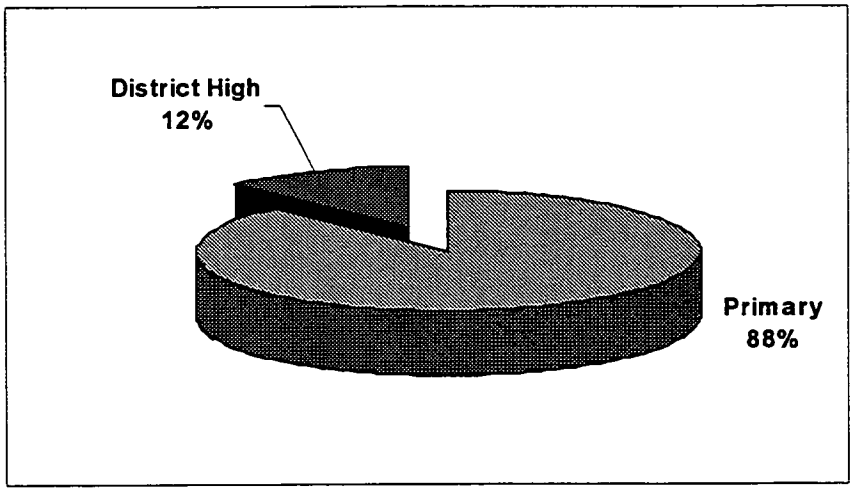

Figure 4. Teachers' school type

Teachers' Gender

Details of the gender ratio of the teachers involved in the study are shown in Figure 5, Teacher's Gender. 99% of respondents were female and 1% were male.

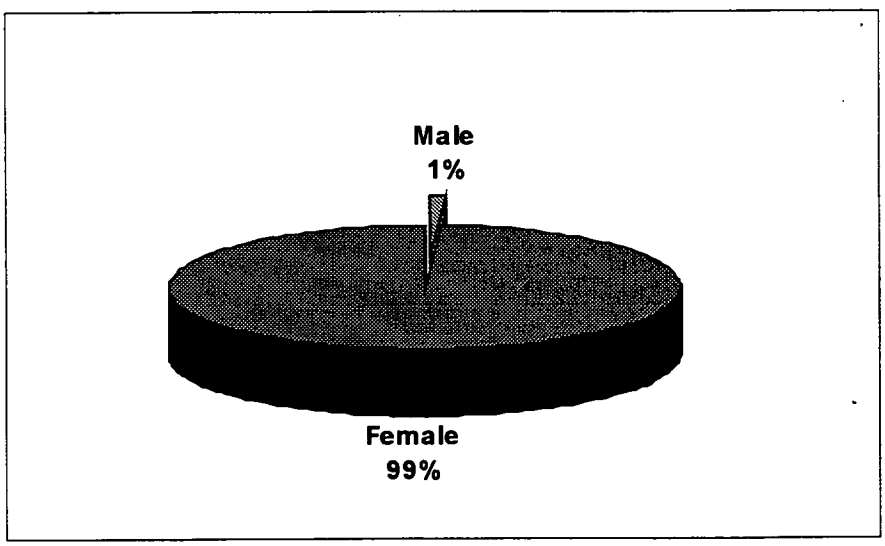

Figure 5. Teachers' gender

Gender of Teachers' Principal

Teachers were asked to indicate the gender of their present school principal. The data obtained is shown below in Figure 6, indicating that 78% of teachers had a male principal and 22% of teachers had a female principal.

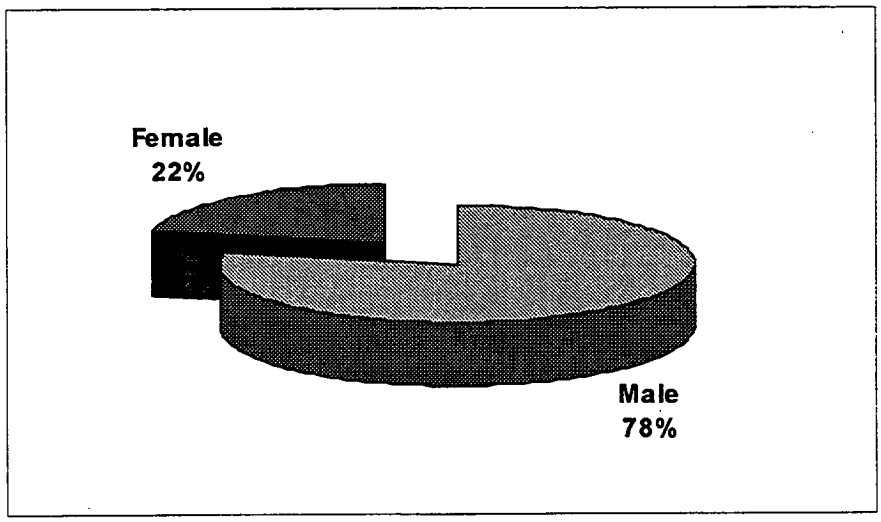

Figure 6. Gender of teachers' school principal

Specialisation of Teachers' School Principals

Six categories were provided for teachers to allow identification of the school principals' teaching training specialisations. The data gathered, in relation to this question, are provided in Figure 7.

Data from this question indicated that 29% of Kindergarten to Grade 2 teachers did not know the area of teaching specialisation of the school principal. There was only one response to each of the categories of physical education and other. The remaining 69% of responses provided data that indicated that 9 teachers had a principal who was early childhood trained (10%), 36 teachers had a primary trained principal (36%), whilst 23 teachers had a principal who had a secondary teaching specialisation (23%).

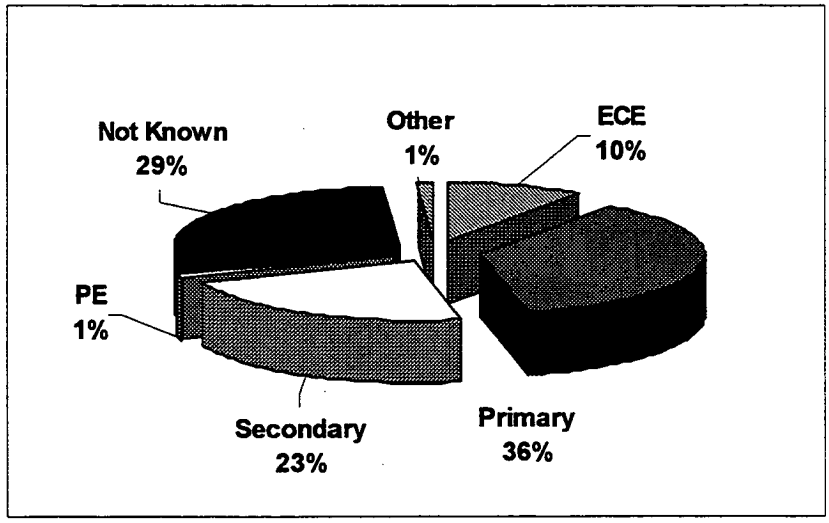

Figure 7. Specialisation of teachers' school principals

Levels of Senior Staff Members in Teachers' Schools

Data were also sought in regard to the levels of senior staff, other than the principal, who are responsible for K- 2 education, in the teachers' schools. In larger sized schools, teachers indicated that there were multiple staff members who had responsibility for leadership in the K- 2 area of the school. Responses are provided in the Figure 8.

Responses showed that 27% of teachers indicated there was an Advanced Skills Teacher 1 (AST 1) responsible for early childhood leadership in their present school, whilst 32% and 10% of teachers, respectively, responded that they had an Advanced Skills Teacher 2 (AST 2) and Advanced Skills Teacher 3 (AST 3), with responsibility. In addition, 26% of respondents had an Assistant Principal (AP) with leadership responsibility for education in K-2 in their schools. Another 5% of teachers indicated that they had senior staff in acting positions within their school, but they all failed to identify the senior staff level to which these leaders belonged.

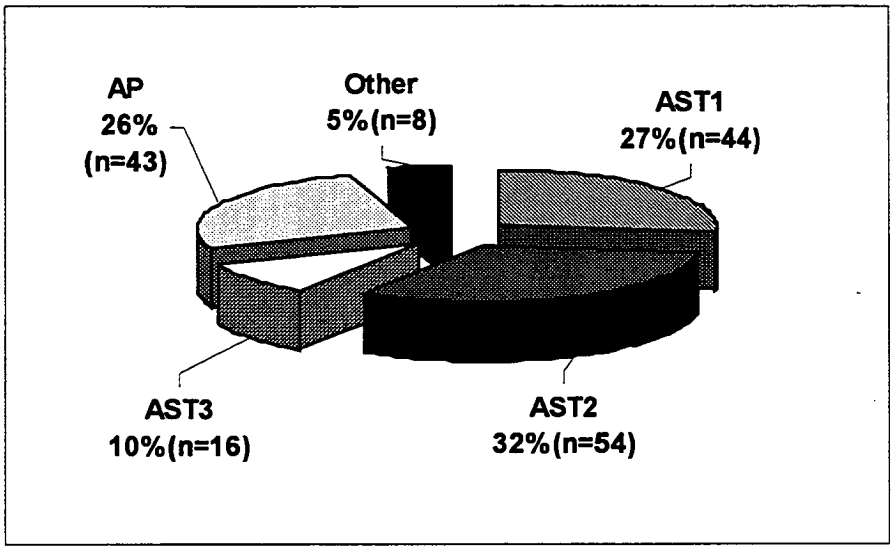

Figure 8. Levels of K- 2 senior staff in teachers' schools

Level of Responsibility of Most Contacted Leader

When teachers were asked to indicate the level of responsibility held by the person (other than the principal) with whom they had most contact regarding leadership issues, six categories were provided for response purposes. Other aspects, related to that person's gender and teaching specialisation, were also included. Two teachers responded by selecting two people as most contacted person(s) in their school. In this case the most senior person was taken as the most contacted leader. The data provided from this question are presented below in Figure 9.

Responses to this question indicated a variety of responsibility levels being held by the person most contacted regarding leadership issues. These indicated that 45% of teachers named an AST 2 and 30% of teachers indicated an AP, as the most contacted person. AST 1 received 5% of responses, AST 3 8% and classroom teachers were named by 11% of teachers. Only one respondent ticked the other box, indicating that their aide was the most contacted person.

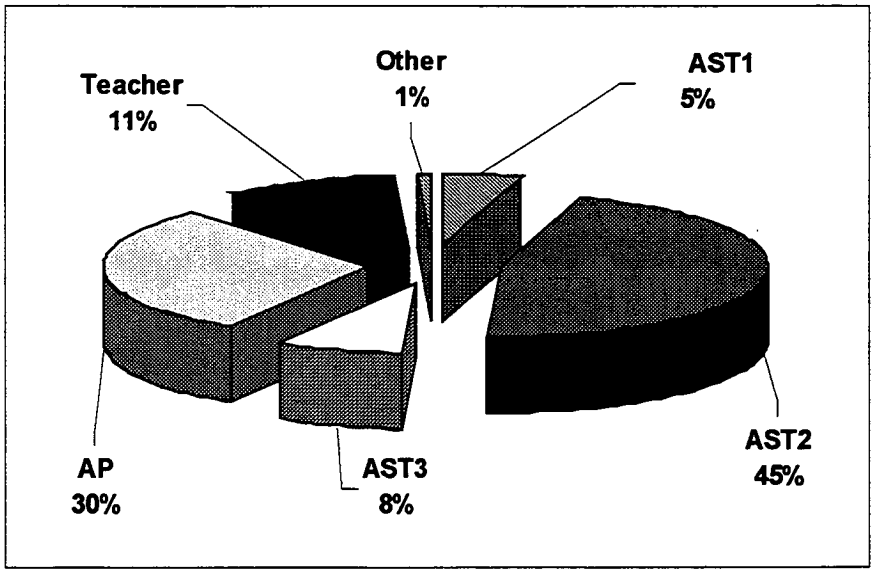

Figure 9. Level of responsibility of most contacted person in K- 2

Gender of Most Contacted Person for Leadership

The data received for this item are provided below in Figure 10. Of respondents, 90% indicated that they turn to a female regarding leadership matters, whilst 10% of teachers named a male person as the most contacted leader for K- 2.

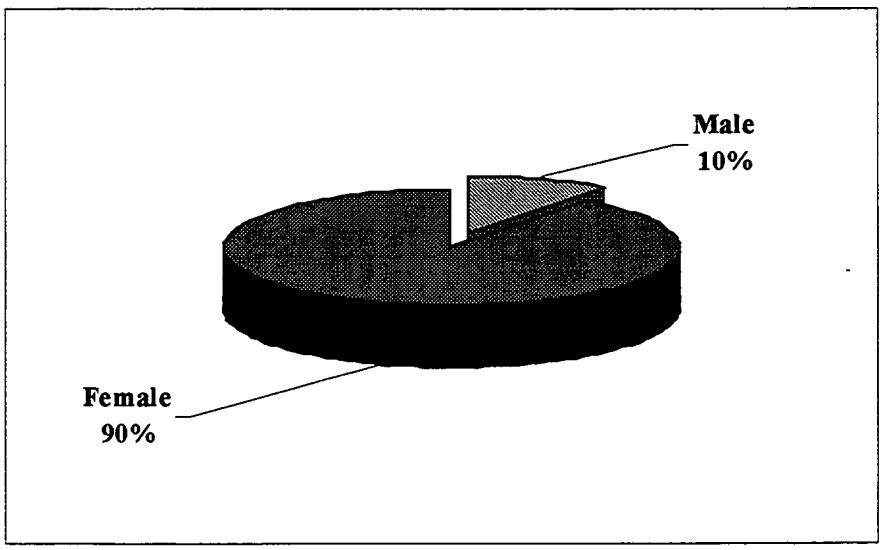

Figure 10. Gender of most contacted person in K- 2 for leadership issues

Specialisation of Most Contacted Person

The final question in this section, which related to the demographic considerations in the quantitative data collected, sought to clarify the teaching specialisation of each teacher's most contacted person for leadership, in respect to K-2 matters. The data gathered are presented below in Figure 11.

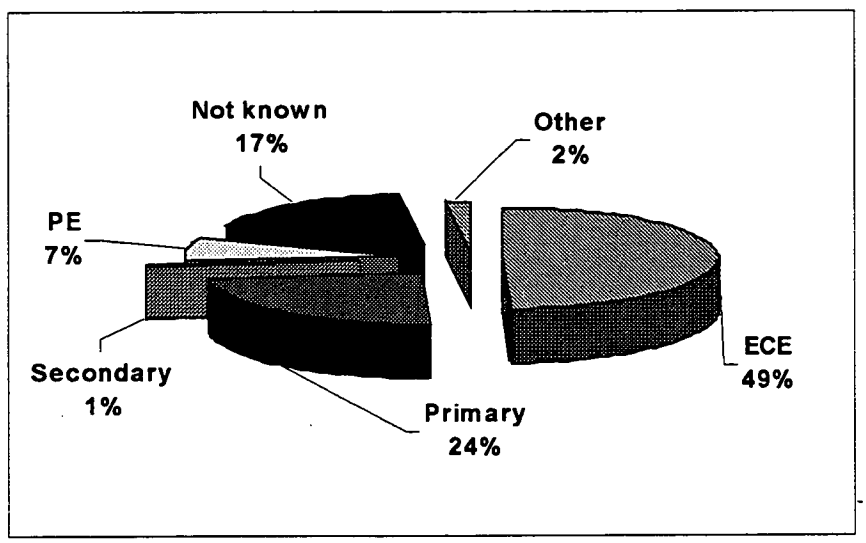

Figure 11. Specialisation of most contacted person in K- 2 for leadership issues

Responses indicated that 17% of teachers could not provide the teaching specialisation of their most contacted person and ticked the unknown category. In addition, 7% of teachers indicated that the specialisation of their most contacted person was in physical education, with 1% naming a secondary trained person and 2% indicating other specialisations. However, 73% of teachers named either a primary (24%) or early childhood (49%) trained person as their most contacted person, in relation to leadership matters.

Teachers' Perceptions Regarding Important Leadership Factors in K-2

In rating the five most important factors, teachers' responses were scored, with the most important factor being given the value of 5, through to the fifth most important factor being recorded as a 1. The frequencies of the teachers' responses, for each leadership factor, are shown in Table 6.

Important Leadership Factor	Frequency	Percent
Demonstrates trust and support of teachers.	76	74
Ensures adequate resource provision for K-2.	68	67
Demonstrates positive leadership presence.	54	53
Helps improve teaching practice.	51	50
Leads with energy and by example.	36	35
Values contributions of K-2 teachers equally.	36	35
Recognises K-2 teachers'performance.	31	30
Possesses sound conflict and negotiation skills.	30	29
Recognises achievement/involvement of K-2 students & parents	29	28
Shares leadership with K-2 teachers.	28	27
Encourages innovation by K-2 teachers.	26	25
Promotes commitment school goals and processes.	18	18
Attends to K-2 teachers' personal needs.	16	16
Other	4	4

Table 6. Teachers' responses to most important leadership issues in K-2

The factor most frequently named by respondents related to a leader's trust and support of teachers. Of the 101 responding teachers, 74% named this factor and, of these, 41% identified this aspect as their most important factor. The next three factors, most frequently specified by teachers, were those related to the provision of adequate resourcing for K-2 education (67% of respondents), having a positive leadership presence (53% of respondents) and help with improving teaching practice

(50% of respondents). The factor recorded least frequently by responding K-2 teachers related to leaders attending to teachers' personal needs, with 16% indicating this as an important factor. Of responding teachers 18% included the aspect of commitment to school goals and processes. Only 3% of responding teachers named a factor in the optional section with two of these responses naming technical understanding of education in K-2 as a key factor.

The mean score of each leadership factor was also calculated, with the results shown in Figure 12.

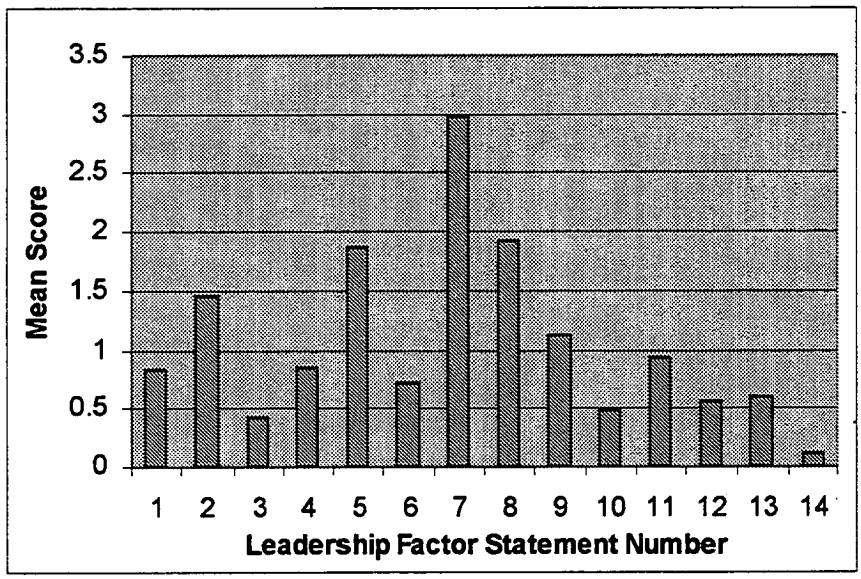

Figure 12. K-2 teachers' perceptions of important leadership factors

Responding K-2 teachers rated the aspect of trust and support (Statement 7) highest, with a mean score of 2.9. Provision of adequate resourcing (Statement 8) at 1.9 and positive leadership (Statement 5) at 1.8 were the next highest. The factor with the lowest mean score (0.8) was again the one that related to leaders attending to teachers' personal needs (Statement 3).

Rating the five most important leadership factors for K-2 education, responding teachers have indicated in consideration of both the frequency and mean scores that leaders' trust and support of teachers, positive leadership presence and provision of adequate resources for K-2 are by far of highest importance.

Teachers' Perceptions of the Most Influential Sources of Leadership for K-2 in Their School

The teachers' responses to this question were scored to allow analysis of the levels of influence of sources of leadership, with very strong (scored as 3), considerable (scored as 2) and moderate (scored as 1). The frequencies with which responding teachers named their leadership sources are shown in Table 7.

Leadership Source	Frequency	Percent
Principal	49	48
Assistant Principal	38	38
Advanced Skills Teacher 1	13	13
Advanced Skills Teacher 2	43	43
Advanced Skills Teacher 3	12	12
Teams of K-2 teachers	72	71
Individual classroom teachers	68	67

Table 7. Teachers' named sources of leadership in K-2

The leadership sources most frequently named by responding teachers were teams of teachers (71%) and individual classroom teachers (67%). Senior staff members (Principal, AP and AST 2) were named by 48%, 38% and 43% of responding teachers respectively. The leadership sources least frequently named were AST 1 (13%) and AST 3 (12%).

The mean score for each leadership source in K-2 was then calculated (3 being for a very strong source of leadership, 2 being for a considerable source of leadership, and 1 being for a moderate source of leadership), with the results shown in Figure 13.

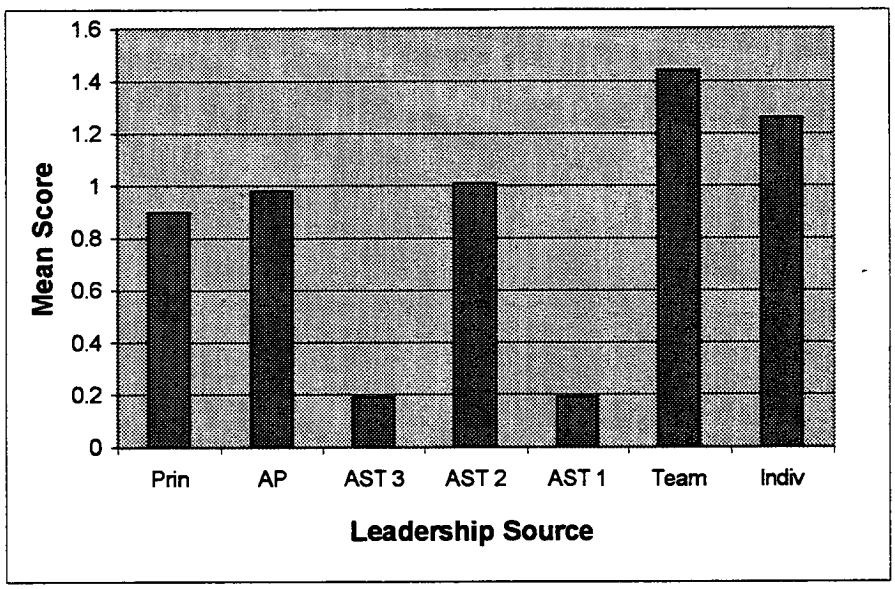

Figure 13. Teachers' influential leadership sources

The two main leadership sources for K-2, highlighted by responding teachers, were teams of teachers (average score of 1.45) and individual classroom teachers (average score of 1.3). Overall, the majority of teachers saw AST 1 and AST 3 as providing low levels of leadership in K-2 education. However, it should be noted that only 10% of responding teachers were from schools with an AST 3.

In summary, teachers in the study identified the most influential sources of leadership for K-2 education as teams of K-2 teachers and individual classroom teachers, both in terms of frequency and average score obtained.

Teachers' Perceptions of the Principal's Role in K-2 Education

The frequencies of teachers' responses to the seventeen statements (see Appendix 10 – question 3f) relating to the Principal's role are shown in Table 8.

Question Number	Rating Categories			
	Strongly Agree 1	Agree 2	Disagree 3	Strongly Disagree 4
1	22	38	28	10
2	8	39	38	12
3	16	41	28	13
4	18	27	32	17
5	27	51	14	7
6	34	39	19	7
7 *	5	23	30	40
8	22	51	19	5
9	20	49	22	7
10	14	50	27	7
11	17	44	27	8
12	52	43	4	1
13	19	42	31	5
14 *	16	23	36	21
15 *	6	28	31	33
16	13	32	36	14
17	20	51	22	6

* Negatively-stated item

Table 8. Frequency of teachers' responses to the nature of the principal's role

Results of the frequency ratings indicated Item 12 as the highest rated statement, with 95% of responding teachers rating "trusts teachers to teach effectively" in the Strongly Agree or Agree category. The statement most frequently rated as 1 (Strongly Agree) by respondents was also Item 12, with 52% responding in this manner.

Analysis of the positively-stated items for Strongly Disagree (rating 4) and Disagree (rating 3) responses revealed the following findings. Statement 2 'provides information on current educational thought in early childhood education to K-2 teachers' and Statement 16 'leads K-2 teachers by personal example' each attracted a 3 or 4 rating from 52% of respondents. Statement 4 'possesses a sound knowledge of what K-2 students need to learn' received a rating of 3 or 4 from 52.6% of responding teachers, whilst Statement 3 'has a positive presence in the K-2 area of the school' was rated 3 or 4 by 40% of responding teachers.

Average scores for the seventeen items were also analysed (where 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Disagree, and 4 = Strongly Disagree), with the data displayed in Figure 14. In the analysis for positively-stated items lower average scores were considered as rating higher, whilst the reverse was true for negatively-stated items.

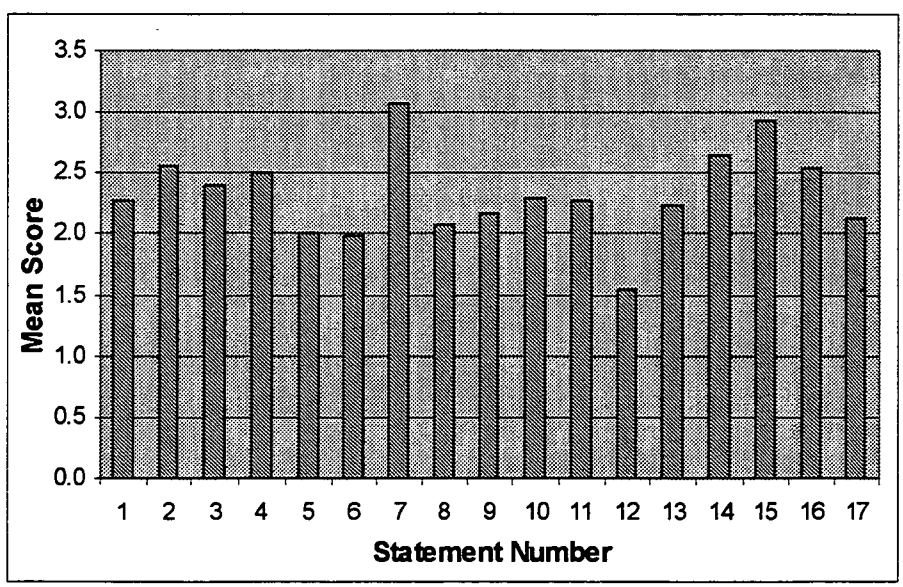

Figure 14. Teachers' perceptions of the nature of the principal's role in K-2

The three statements rated most highly by responding teachers were: Item 12 'trusts K-2 teachers to teach effectively' (1.54); Item 6 'equally values contributions of all K-2 teachers' (1.99) and Item 2 'empowers teachers to take on leadership roles'

(2.01). Three items scored 2.5 or above, which indicates an overall Disagree rating. These statements were: Item 2 'provides information on current educational thought in early childhood education to K-2 teachers' (2.56); Item 16 'leads other by personal example" (2.54); and Item 4 'possesses a sound knowledge of what K-2 students need to learn' (2.51).

Statement 14, which was a negative item, had an average score of 2.65. This rating falls into the category of Agree. This statement read "is unable to assist K-2 teachers to improve their teaching practices owing to lack of technical knowledge". In summary, teachers' perceptions of the principal's role indicated several negative trends in relation to personal knowledge, expertise, and example-setting in K-2.

Teachers' Perceptions of the Nature of Their Most Contacted Staff Member's Leadership Role in K-2 Education

The 56 statements, regarding the nature of the leadership role, provided by each teacher's most contacted staff member, were analysed. The mean score of teachers' responses for each statement are shown in Table 9.

Statement Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Mean Score	1.64	1.91	3.52	1.33	1.61	1.65	1.78	1.67

Statement Number	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Mean Score	2.02	1.54	1.62	1.66	2.22	1.82	1.90	1.53

Statement Number	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Mean Score	1.84	2.35	1.82	1.63	1.90	2.09	1.95	1.59

Statement Number	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
Mean Score	1.73	1.77	2.03	3.55	1.82	1.81	1.88	2.10

Statement Number	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
Mean Score	1.74	1.77	3.20	1.77	1.82	2.02	1.72	1.70

Statement Number	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
Mean Score	1.60	1.66	2.99	1.60	3.41	1.79	1.98	3.40

Statement Number	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56
Mean Score	3.21	1.90	1.80	3.16	1.84	2.02	1.59	3.06

Table 9. Mean scores of teachers' perceptions of the nature of the leadership role of their most contacted leader

Considering the results shown in the table, Statement 4, "responds to K-2 teachers' personal concerns with consideration", scored the lowest mean score, indicating that this was the item most strongly supported by the majority of teachers' responses. The next four statements with which responding teachers had strongest agreement showed mean scores below 1.60. These statements were 16, "treats each K-2 teacher as an individual with unique needs and expertise" (mean score of 1.53), 10 "shows sensitivity to K-2 teachers" (mean score of 1.54), 24 "demonstrates effective interpersonal skills" (mean score of 1.59), and 55, "respects opinions of K-2 teachers" (mean score of 1.59).

No positively-stated items received a mean score greater than 2.50, which would represent their falling into the Disagree rating. However, four statements achieved mean scores greater than 2.08, indicating that responding teachers had marginal agreement with these. These were Statements 18, "informs K-2 teachers of what high teaching performance means" (mean score of 2.35), 13 "regularly discusses activities in their classrooms with K-2 teachers" (mean score of 2.22), 32 "encourages K-2 teachers to regularly evaluate progress made towards goals for K-2

education" (mean score of 2.10), and 22 "provides extended training to help develop K-2 teachers' knowledge and skills" (mean score of 2.09).

Negatively-stated items all fell within the Disagree or Strongly Disagree ratings, having mean scores greater than 2.50. The negative statements with the highest mean scores were Statement 28 "discourages contributions from all K-2 teachers" (mean score of 3.55), and Statement 3 "doesn't encourage K-2 teachers to work towards school goals" (mean score of 3.52).

In summary, teachers' perceptions of the nature of the leadership role of their most contacted staff member in K-2 education indicates that these leaders respond to staff members' concerns, respect their opinions, and demonstrate effective interpersonal skills. Lesser agreement was evidenced in teachers' responses to the statements related to time for discussion, information about high performance and goal setting in K-2 education and providing professional development opportunities.

The Qualitative Results From Teachers' Survey Responses

This section of the results presents qualitative data received from participating teachers regarding their views on the greatest challenges for K-2 leaders, whether lack of early childhood training limits the effectiveness of K-2 leaders, and their perceptions regarding the strengths, weaknesses, and primary tasks of their leaders.

Teachers' Views on the Greatest Challenges for School Leaders in K-2

Responses were coded into five categories, Change, Parents, Knowledge, Relationships, and Organisational Issues. Data for this question are provided in Table 10.

Greatest Challenges For K-2 Leaders	Frequency	Percentage
CHANGE	46	23.5
• Procedural/accountability issues	10	5.1
• Resourcing	14	7.1
• Educational	16	8.2
• Teachers & children	6	3.1
PARENTS	14	7.1
• Expectations	13	6.6
• Utilisation	1	0.5
KNOWLEDGE	40	20.4
• Leaders	22	11.2
• Teachers	7	3.6
• General awareness	11	3.6
RELATIONSHIPS	34	17.3
• Teachers	20	10.2
• Children	7	3.6
• Parents	7	3.6
ORGANISATIONAL	62	31.6
• Time	24	12.2
• Equity	15	7.7
• School requirements	11	5.6
• Departmental requirements	12	6.1

Table 10. Teachers' responses concerning the key challenges for K-2 leaders

Of responding teachers, 32% named organisational factors as key challenges for today's school leaders in K-2 education. The least-named challenge was seen by responding teachers to be associated with issues involving parents in the school community.

A key aspect from the Organisational Matters category, which attracted 12.2% of teachers' responses, related to time-defined imperatives. This challenge included finding time for K-2 leaders to provide leadership since, as one respondent

commented, "there is so much contact time set (on-class teaching time) they have less time to casually visit classrooms and speak to children". Furthermore, another respondent stated that K-2 leaders need to be "not only 'doing discipline' with bad children (this being the only time they are seen)".

Further analysis of the data, within the five categories, showed that in the Knowledge category, 11.2% of teachers' responses indicated that teachers believed that school leaders needed to have a deeper understanding, and first hand knowledge, of the needs of K-2 children and what happens in their classrooms. One teacher captured this challenge for school leaders as "keeping in touch with everyday demands on Early childhood teachers and what it's like in the classroom", while another respondent wrote that "many leaders may need to undertake some early childhood professional development so they are more able to understand and support teachers of early childhood". Aspects related to the general knowledge of, and recognition of the importance of, K-2 education by other teachers and school community members were raised by other respondents, with the essence of their comments being covered by the following quoted examples. What K-2 teachers must do is explain, "to upper-primary teachers, the different needs of early childhood classes, with regard to class size, teacher aide allocation and requirements on whole-school carnival and picnic days", and "to demonstrate to the primary and secondary field of education that the work being carried on in early childhood is demanding, worthwhile and not just 'play' ".

The third major challenge, according to teachers' responses, concerned relationships, especially with respect to teachers. Of issues which fell within the Relationships category, accessibility and support were seen as being important, being covered by 10.2% of total responses. One teacher commented that leaders need to be

"available on a daily basis – usually **at school** every day and visible", and also "be available to provide support for 'stressed' teachers with large class numbers, which have an increasing number of social and emotional problems, or children being 'included' with academic special needs".

Other challenge areas for K-2 leaders, which contributed to 5% or more of teachers' responses, related to: change issues, such as accountability, resourcing and curriculum 'developments'; issues based upon parents' expectations; general awareness of K-2 education; and organisational matters involving equity, school and departmental factors. One respondent captured the challenges in this area for senior staff by stating that it is the "issue of coping with the incredible pace of change – particularly involving socio-economic factors and the stress challenges of higher and broader expectations being placed upon schools and their staff".

Teachers' Responses to Whether Lack of Training in Early Childhood Education Limits Effectiveness in K-2 Leadership

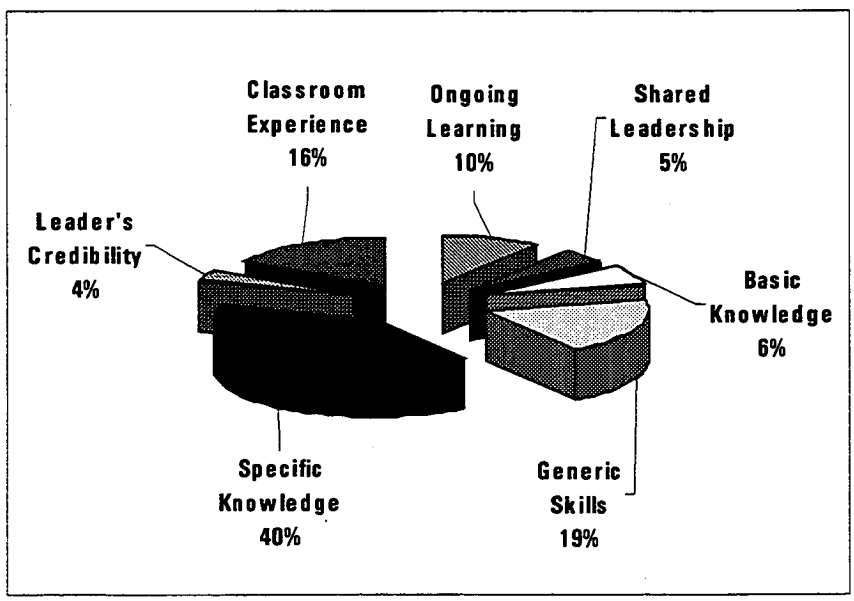

Figure 15. Teachers' responses regarding the effect of lack of early childhood training on K-2 Leadership

A total of 91 teachers responded to this question, with 59 indicating 'Yes' and 32 indicating 'No'. The remaining respondents ticked neither box, but it was possible to code their perceptions into the 'Yes' and 'No' categories from their responses to the other section of this question. Teachers' responses to this question have been coded into categories and are displayed in Figure 15 above.

Analysis of the teachers' reasons for 'No' responses provided four key categories. These were the generic nature of leadership skills, ongoing commitment to learning by school leaders, basic knowledge of child development possessed by all teachers, and the widespread use of shared leadership practices in schools today. Of teachers' responses, 19% highlighted the generic nature of leadership and, as one teacher commented, "an effective leader should be able to demonstrate skills in whichever area they have leadership". In addition, 10% of responses referred to leaders' commitment to ongoing learning, as highlighted in the following quotes, "if a person is in a position of leadership in the early childhood area, he/she should demonstrate commitment to understanding the development of young children" and "if a person does not have Early childhood training, but is willing to listen and learn from others, then their leadership can be extremely effective". A further 6% of responses, coming from teachers who indicated 'No' to the question, were related to the basic knowledge of all teachers/leaders regarding general child development. However, in relation to leadership, specific to K-2, one teacher responded that leaders "need to be aware that there are differences between early childhood and primary, and demonstrate this in their leadership". The final category of reasons for teachers responding in the negative, with 5% of responses, related to issues of shared leadership in K-2. One respondent stated "the leader can always delegate that role to

another member of senior staff", and another "any specialised knowledge required could be obtained from an early childhood trained teacher".

Three key issues became evident within the reasons for affirmative responses to the question from teachers. These issues related to specific knowledge required in K-2 education, the need for Early childhood classroom teaching experience and credibility of leaders. Of teachers' responses, 40% referred to the perceived need for K-2 leaders to have specialised knowledge of early childhood education. Statements from responding teachers supporting this aspect include "just as a teacher needs training in the area they are teaching, so too does a school leader", and, "having an understanding of, knowledge of and empathy with the needs, developmental levels and behavioural traits of K-2 children will help them make informed and equitable decisions when dealing with issues in this area", and, K-2 leaders "need to recognise the special ways to deal with early childhood children and have a working knowledge of how and why young children learn". Another affirmative category, covered in 16% of teachers' reasons, related to the perceived need for leaders to have experience teaching in early childhood classrooms. As several respondents stated, the K-2 leader should "have worked in this area to fully understand what is needed", and, "unless you have **first-hand** experience in a Kinder, Prep or Grade 1, you cannot fully understand the demands that the teachers in these grades have placed upon them by students, parents and wet days", and, "it's not so much **training** as **experience** or **awareness** (ie primary principals' professional development should include taking an early childhood class for a term!)". Of responses covering reasons for choosing the 'Yes' alternative, 4% focussed upon the need for leaders to have credibility within the school community. As one teacher commented, "they also need to be a 'sounding board' for early childhood teachers who may be limited by a

lack of specific training". Another respondent cited a personal experience to support the lack of credibility of leaders with no early childhood training when she stated "as I was the only early childhood trained teacher in my school earlier this year, I had a very difficult time", [due to the leader's] "lack of support and understanding". Another teacher reported that K-2 training was necessary for leaders "because mostly they don't actually know, they just think they do when it comes to almost anything to do with the early childhood area".

Of the reasons provided by respondents, 40% related to a negative response to the question concerning the need for effective leaders to have K-2 specific knowledge, with the reasons falling into four key categories; the generic nature of leadership, basic knowledge of child development, widely practised shared leadership and leaders' commitment to ongoing learning. The 60% of responses, which related to a positive reply to the question, were classified into three categories: specific K-2 knowledge, K-2 classroom teaching experience and the need for leaders' credibility in early childhood education.

Teachers' Perceptions Regarding Their Principals' Leadership Strengths

Responding K-2 teachers' perceptions were coded according to the nature of their responses regarding the principal's leadership strengths. The frequencies and percentages with which responding teachers named the various leadership strengths are presented in Table 11.

Teachers' Perceptions of Principals' Strengths in K-2	Frequency	Percentage
VISION AND TEAM BUILDING	70	22.1
• Energy	6	1.9
• Presence	11	3.5
• Shared leadership	8	2.5
• Equity	10	3.1
• Risk taking	7	2.2
• Evaluation	11	3.5
• Collaboration	5	1.6
• Team building	12	3.8
SCHOOL & COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS	173	54.6
• Parents	13	4.1
• Pastoral care	8	2.5
• Trust	14	4.4
• Conflict skills	15	4.7
• Interpersonal skills	56	17.7
• Accessibility	16	5.1
• Consultation	6	1.9
• Interest	17	5.4
• Support	28	8.8
INSTRUCTIONAL	31	9.7
• Assistance	2	0.6
• Professional development	11	3.5
• Knowledge	14	4.4
• Feedback	2	0.6
• Innovation	2	0.6
PERFORMANCE RELATED	43	13.6
• Recognition	18	5.7
• Resources	2	0.6
• High performance	4	1.3
• Organisational skills	14	4.4
• Administrative skills	5	1.6

Table 11. Teachers' perceptions of principals' strengths in K-2

The category with the greatest number of teachers' responses was School and Community Relationships (54.6% of responses). Within this category, the most significant perceived leadership strength for the principals was related to

interpersonal skills, with 17.7% of responses. Within this grouping 15 teachers named the ability to listen, 11 teachers named the principal's approach and friendly manner and 9 cited high level communication skills as being significant aspects of the principal's interpersonal skills. One respondent captured this aspect, stating "she is honest in her daily dealings with us and is approachable". The second most frequently named strength of the principal related to personnel support issues, with 8.8% of teachers' responses identifying this aspect.

Responding teachers named four other major principals' strength areas: recognition of performance (5.7%), interest (5.4%), accessibility (5.1%) and conflict skills (4.7%).

Principals' leadership strengths least frequently named by responding K-2 teachers were assistance, feedback, provision of resources, and innovation. These particular leadership strengths were each referred to in only two responses.

Teachers' Perceptions Regarding Their Principals' Leadership Weaknesses

Perceptions held by K-2 teachers in this study, regarding their principal's leadership weaknesses, are given in Table 12.

The category attracting the most responses was School and Community Relationships, with 51.8% of responses. In this category, the most frequently named principal's leadership weakness involved interpersonal skills, referred to in 18.4% of responses. Aspects of this weakness, raised by K-2 teachers, involved principals' interpersonal skills with students and general communication skills, especially deficits in their ability to listen. As one respondent stated, the principal needed to engage in "active listening – not just hearing but following up" and another teacher

commented that the principal's weakness was "relating to young children – a bit foreign and too difficult".

Teachers' Perceptions of Principals' Weaknesses in K-2	Frequency	Percentage
VISION AND TEAM BUILDING	37	22.0
• Presence	16	9.5
• Shared leadership	3	1.8
• Equity	10	5.9
• Risk taking	2	1.2
• Evaluation	2	1.2
• Collaboration	2	1.2
• Team building	2	1.2
SCHOOL & COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS	87	51.8
• Parents	4	2.4
• Pastoral Care	3	1.8
• Trust	1	0.6
• Reliability	1	0.6
• Conflict Skills	14	8.4
• Interpersonal Skills	31	18.4
• Accessibility	17	10.1
• Interest	5	3.0
• Support	11	6.5
INSTRUCTIONAL	30	17.9
• Assistance	3	1.8
• Professional Development	3	1.8
• Knowledge	17	10.1
• Feedback	3	1.8
• Innovation	4	2.4
PERFORMANCE RELATED	14	8.4
• Recognition	7	4.2
• Resources	1	0.6
• High Performance	1	0.6
• Organisational Skills	3	1.8
• Administrative Skills	2	1.2

Table 12. Teachers' perceptions of principals' weaknesses in K-2

Two other key weaknesses in the principal's leadership of K-2, named by responding teachers, related to accessibility and knowledge, each referred to in 10.1% of responses. Accessibility issues raised by respondents were related to one key issue, the principal's failure to allow time to be with K-2 students. One teacher captured the issue in the following statement. The principal needs to be "visiting classrooms more frequently to establish good rapport with children". In the Instructional category, lack of knowledge of K-2 education was seen as a weakness in the principal's leadership skills by responding K-2 teachers, with particular aspects involving curriculum, ethos and routine. Two statements by respondents captured the essence of many concerns, contending that the principal needed to "understand EC ethos and way of thinking" and provide "a balance between children's needs and what the department requires children to learn".

Of responding teachers, 9.5% named the lack of the principal's presence in the school and classroom as a leadership weakness. This relates closely to the accessibility issue raised previously, with two teachers commenting that the principal needed to be "spending more time in individual classrooms so that children are aware of a specific interest being taken in the whole class and individual work", and "not being out of the school so much".

Deficits in the principal's conflict resolution and negotiation skills were named as leadership weaknesses in 8.4% of responses. Two viewpoints raised by teachers can be captured in the following quotes. The principal needs to be "able to view conflict as a difference of opinion, not personal criticism" and to be " stronger in challenging people who pay lip service to school goals".

In summary, principals' weaknesses in K-2 leadership were seen, by responding teachers, to be related to interpersonal skills, accessibility and presence, knowledge of K-2 education, and skill deficits in conflict resolution and negotiation.

Teachers' Responses Related to the Primary Tasks Undertaken by the School Principal in Leadership in K-2

Teachers listed the primary leadership tasks undertaken by the principal in their school, in relation to K-2 education, and their responses were coded into seven categories: Program Management, Personnel Management, Management of Professional Development, Presence, School Policy/Curriculum Management, General Operational Management, and Other. The frequencies and percentages, related to the teachers' responses, are shown in Table 13.

The group of K-2 leadership tasks most frequently named by responding teachers lay in the General Operational Management category, with 25.0% of responses. The principals' main tasks, as perceived by responding teachers, related to the day to day operational issues of the school, attracting 15.4% of responses. Within this group, tasks cited by teachers were varied, with the most frequently mentioned including "staffing", "assemblies", "meetings", and "running the school".

The second most frequently named task category involved Personnel Management (19.7% of responses), with teachers referring to teacher-related and student-related issues in 8.5% and 8.0% of responses, respectively. The main task highlighted by respondents was support for teachers by the principal, whilst behaviour management was the key student-related task.

Primary Leadership Tasks in K-2 Education	Frequency	Percent
PROGRAM MANAGEMENT	22	11.7
• Flying Start	14	7.4
• Special needs	2	1.1
• Other	6	3.2
PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT	37	19.7
• Teacher related	16	8.5
• Student related	15	8.0
• Parent related	6	3.2
MANAGEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	20	10.6
• Organising	12	6.4
• Leading	3	1.6
• Assessing Needs	5	2.6
PRESENCE	26	13.8
• At school	23	12.2
• In community	3	1.6
SCHOOL POLICY/CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT	19	10.1
• Development	2	1.1
• Implementation	2	1.1
• Evaluation	3	1.6
• Other	12	6.3
GENERAL OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT	47	25.0
• Documentation	1	0.5
• Resourcing – Personnel & Physical	4	2.1
• Delegation of Tasks	13	6.9
• Day to Day Operation	29	15.4
OTHER	17	9.1
• Unknown	5	2.7
• None	12	6.4

Table 13. Teachers' perceptions of the primary leadership tasks undertaken by the principal, in relation to K-2 education

The third most frequently named category referred to tasks involved with presence, with 13.8% of responses. Teachers referred to the principal's presence at school (12.2% of responses), citing tasks such as "visiting classrooms", "occasional teaching", and "presence in the playground".

Within the Program Management category, the Other section (3.3% of responses) covered special school-based programs, such as literacy, information technology, sports and activity. In the School Policy/Curriculum Management category, the Other section (6.3% of responses) was used to code specific tasks undertaken by the principal in relation to policy management. Teachers referred to tasks such as "updating teacher", "detailing expectations" and "involvement in all school decision making" in this section.

The Other category was used to record teachers' responses which stated that the principal's leadership tasks in K-2 education were None (6.4% of responses) or Unknown (2.7% of responses).

In summary, teachers' major responses to the primary tasks, undertaken by their principals in relation to K-2 education, were related to day to day operational management and personnel management for teachers and students.

Teachers' Reasons Why They Turn to Their Most Contacted Staff Member for Support

Responding teachers provided 283 reasons, which were coded into five categories, the frequencies of which are presented in Table 14.

Teachers' Reasons for Turning to Most Contacted Staff Member	Frequency	Percentage
DESIGNATED LEADER	23	8.1
VISION AND TEAM BUILDING	21	7.4
• Energy	6	2.1
• Presence	1	0.4
• Shared Leadership	4	1.4
• Equity	3	1.1
• Risk Taking	3	1.1
• Evaluation	4	1.4
SCHOOL & COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS	144	51.0
• Parents	5	1.8
• Pastoral Care	21	7.4
• Trust	7	2.5
• Reliability	1	0.4
• Conflict Skills	7	2.5
• Interpersonal Skills	51	18.0
• Accessibility	22	7.8
• Interest	3	1.1
• Support	27	9.5
INSTRUCTIONAL	75	26.5
• Assistance	8	2.8
• Professional Development	2	0.7
• Knowledge	55	19.4
• Feedback	6	2.1
• Innovation	3	1.1
• Initiative	1	0.4
PERFORMANCE RELATED	20	7.1
• Recognition	4	1.4
• High Performance	8	2.8
• Empowerment	1	0.4
• Organisational Skills	7	2.5

Table 14. Teachers' reasons for turning to most contacted staff member

The two categories most frequently named by responding teachers were those concerned with School and Community Relationships (51% of responses) and Instructional matters (26.5% of responses). In these two categories, the two reasons

most frequently referred to by responding teachers were those related to knowledge-based issues (19.4% of responses) and interpersonal skills (18.0% of responses). When referring to their most contacted staff member's expertise in early childhood education, two respondents made the following comments: "she possesses sound knowledge of how children learn in the early years and has a sympathetic ear", and, "you can talk to her and know that you are talking to someone with experience". Many interpersonal skills were named by teachers when referring to their most contacted staff member. Being approachable was mentioned by 20.8% of respondents and 11.9% of teachers referred to their most contacted staff member's ability to listen. The key interpersonal skills raised by respondents were captured by this quote from one teacher, "she is easily approached, listens, provides support, and encouragement".

The key aspect of support by the most contacted staff member was referred to in 9.5% of responses. One teacher noted that the person most contacted "is supportive of decisions made in all areas", while another respondent stated "she will always give time and follow through with appropriate support where necessary".

A further 7.8% of responses referred to accessibility, as a reason for selection of their most contacted staff member in leadership matters. The following quote reflected the thoughts of several responding teachers in this regard. "He works in close proximity to me and is a good listener".

Of responses, 7.4% related to reasons associated with pastoral care, with over half of these noting significant care for both teachers and children. One respondent noted that her most contacted person "knows all the early childhood children and shows genuine concern and understanding". Words commonly used by teachers, in

relation to pastoral care provided by their most contacted person, were "considerate, personal interest, compassionate [and] thoughtful".

A final reason for turning to their most contacted staff member, provided in 8.1% of responses, was simply that the person was the designated leader for the area. Comments such as "you have to. The principal says to ask her", and "because the AST 2 in this school has the role of looking after the early childhood section", were typical of responses from this group of respondents.

In summary, the two major reasons provided by respondents, as to why they turn to their most contacted staff member for support, were their knowledge of K-2 education and their competence in interpersonal relationships.

Teachers' Perceptions of the Leadership Strengths of Their Most Contacted Staff Member

K-2 teachers provided 408 responses, giving their perceptions of the leadership strengths of their most contacted staff member, which are presented in Table 15.

The leadership strength most frequently named by responding K-2 teachers, in consideration of their most contacted staff member for leadership, related to the category of School and Community Relationships, with 43.9% of responses. Of these responses, 19.4% related to interpersonal skills, with aspects such as listening, approachability and people skills being cited as key components.

Teachers referred to the competence of their most contacted staff member in the Instructional category, with 25.7% of responses being related to this aspect. Knowledge of K-2 education was seen as a strength of teachers' most contacted staff members, with 12.0% of responses referring to this person's experience and expertise in early childhood teaching and learning. A third aspect of leadership strength, found

in 9.3% of teachers' responses, related to support given to teachers by their most contacted staff member.

Perceptions of Most Contacted Leader's Leadership Strengths	Frequency	Percentage
VISION AND TEAM BUILDING	78	19.1
• Energy	22	5.4
• Presence	15	3.7
• Shared leadership	5	1.2
• Equity	13	3.2
• Risk taking	6	1.5
• Evaluation	7	1.7
• Collaboration	6	1.5
• Team building	4	1.0
SCHOOL & COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS	179	43.9
• Parents	5	1.2
• Pastoral care	30	7.4
• Trust	4	1.0
• Reliability	5	1.2
• Conflict skills	12	3.0
• Interpersonal skills	79	19.4
• Accessibility	5	1.2
• Interest	1	0.2
• Support	38	9.3
INSTRUCTIONAL	105	25.7
• Assistance	17	4.2
• Professional development	5	1.2
• Knowledge	49	12.0
• Feedback	23	5.7
• Innovation	9	2.2
• Initiative	2	0.5
PERFORMANCE RELATED	46	11.3
• Recognition	17	4.2
• Resources	2	0.5
• High performance	18	4.4
• Empowerment	1	0.2
• Organisational skills	7	1.7
• Administrative skills	1	0.2

Table 15. Teachers' perceptions of the leadership strengths of their most contacted staff member

Of teachers' responses, 7.4% referred to their most contacted staff member as having leadership strengths in pastoral care. Descriptive words used by teachers to describe this characteristic of the staff member included "caring", "empathy towards and understanding of teachers" and "concern for the welfare of students".

The least cited leadership strengths of K-2 teachers' most contacted staff member included aspects such as resourcing (0.5% of responses), initiative (0.5% of responses), interest (0.2% of responses), empowerment (0.2% of responses) and administrative skills (0.2% of responses).

In summary, responding K-2 teachers perceived the leadership strengths of their most contacted staff member to be in interpersonal skills, knowledge of K-2 education, support, and pastoral care for school members. Responses frequently contained words, such as "dependable", "knowledge of EC area", "wide experience in K-2" and "approachable" to describe their K-2 most contacted staff member.

Teachers' Perceptions of the Leadership Weaknesses of Their Most Contacted Staff Member

Teachers' perceptions of their most contacted staff member's leadership weaknesses are presented in Table 16.

Leadership weaknesses, most frequently named by teachers when considering their most contacted staff member, were in the categories concerned with Vision and Team Building and School and Community Relationships, with each category attracting 31% of responses. Responding teachers saw deficits in interpersonal skills as leadership weaknesses in their most contacted staff member, with 14.2% of responses related to this aspect. Key weaknesses, highlighted by respondents, were related to poor communication skills (including lack of active listening), failure to

give serious consideration to teachers' concerns, and not being approachable. For example, one teacher commented that her most contacted staff member needs to "be more approachable and available to talk – especially for younger inexperienced staff".

Perceptions of Most Contacted Leader's Leadership Weaknesses	Frequency	Percentage
VISION AND TEAM BUILDING	35	31
• Energy	1	0.9
• Presence	6	5.3
• Shared leadership	3	2.7
• Equity	4	3.5
• Risk taking	5	4.4
• Evaluation	3	2.7
• Collaboration	12	10.6
• Team building	1	0.9
SCHOOL & COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS	35	31
• Pastoral care	2	1.8
• Trust	2	1.8
• Conflict skills	5	4.4
• Interpersonal skills	16	14.2
• Accessibility	4	3.5
• Consultation	1	0.9
• Interest	1	0.9
• Support	4	3.5
INSTRUCTIONAL	23	20.3
• Professional development	3	2.7
• Knowledge	15	13.2
• Feedback	4	3.5
• Innovation	1	0.9
PERFORMANCE RELATED	20	17.7
• Recognition	3	2.7
• Resources	1	0.9
• Organisational skills	15	13.2
• Administrative skills	1	0.9

Table 16. Teachers' perceptions of the leadership weaknesses of their most contacted staff member

Teachers, in 13.2% of their responses, referred to the staff member's knowledge deficits in relation to early childhood education. Three teachers commented that their leader needed to display "greater empathy towards the stresses of ECE compared with primary", and "develop knowledge of teaching and learning in K-2", as well as "understanding the needs of young children".

Another perceived weakness related to the most contacted leaders' organisational skills, with 13.2% of responses being concerned with this aspect. Responding teachers perceived that these staff members often demonstrated inadequacy in organisational matters. However, nine of these teachers referred to time limitations as a major cause and used words and phrases such as "overworked", "reduced contact time (in classroom teaching) so more accessible", "more time to carry out her role without pressure" and "have less on her plate" to describe their most contacted staff member.

Furthermore, 10.6% of responses received from teachers indicated that their most contacted staff member's collaborative skills were lacking. Among the deficits cited were being dogmatic in beliefs, failure to consider alternative views, and not providing the opportunity for teachers to share experiences. Two respondents commented that their K-2 staff member for leadership issues needed "to accept that not everyone will agree with her on all points" and "not push her own ideas" so that K-2 teachers can be a team.

In summary, collaborative processes, knowledge of K-2 education, organisational skills and interpersonal skills, were named as areas of weakness in the leadership.

Quantitative Results From Leaders' Survey Responses

Forty respondents returned the leaders' survey, which represents a 70% return rate. Demographic data obtained were concerned with school leaders' level of qualifications and teaching specialisation, school type, classification and gender.

Leaders' Levels of Qualifications

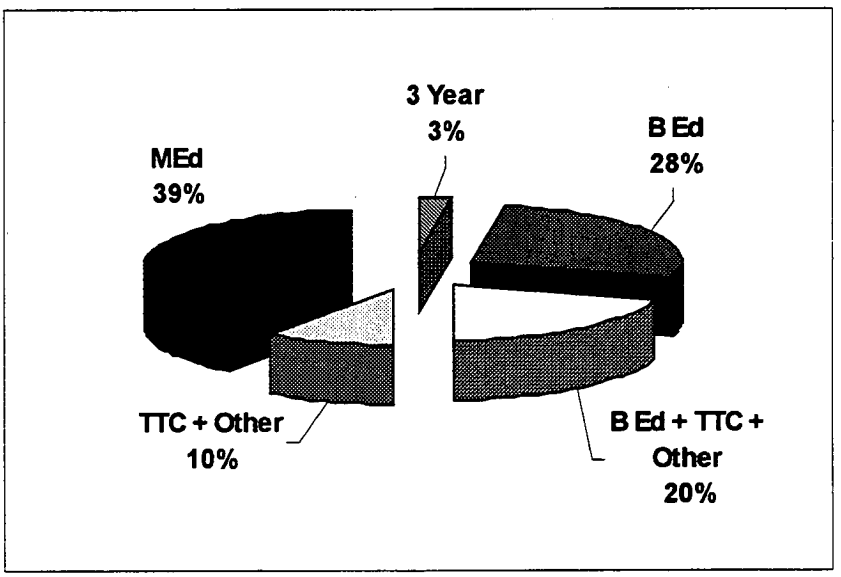

Figure 16. Leaders' levels of qualifications

The percentages of leaders' responses concerning the level of their qualifications are displayed in Figure 16, above.

Figure 16 shows that 1 leader (3%) was 3 Year trained, 4 leaders (10%) had a Tasmanian Teachers Certificate (TTC) and another degree or diploma, which included Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Arts, Diploma of Education and Graduate Diploma of Special Education. Also, 11 leaders (28%) held a Bachelor of Education (B Ed) degree, whilst 8 leaders (20%) had a Bachelor of Education (B Ed) degree and their Tasmanian Teachers Certificate (TTC) with another diploma or certificate

in education. A further 16 leaders (39%) had two degrees, which included a Master of Education degree and one other.

Leaders' Teaching Specialisation

Leaders' responses related to their teaching specialisations are shown in Figure 17.

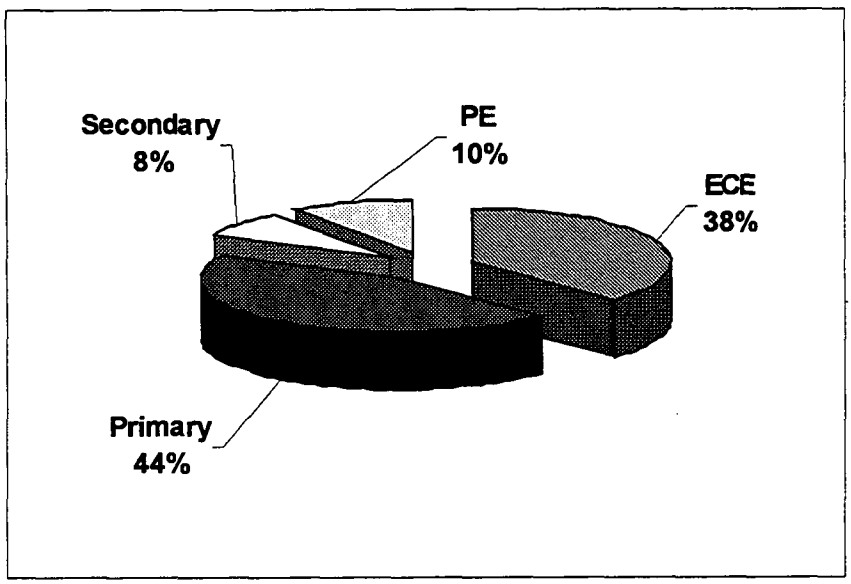

Figure 17. Leaders' specialisation

Of responding school leaders, 15 (38%) possessed an early childhood teaching specialisation, whilst 18 respondents (44%) had a specialisation in primary education. A further 3 responding leaders (8%) held a secondary teaching specialisation, whilst 4 (10%) were trained in physical education.

Leaders' Type of School

Identification of each leader's current school type was sought in the survey. Results are given in Figure 18.

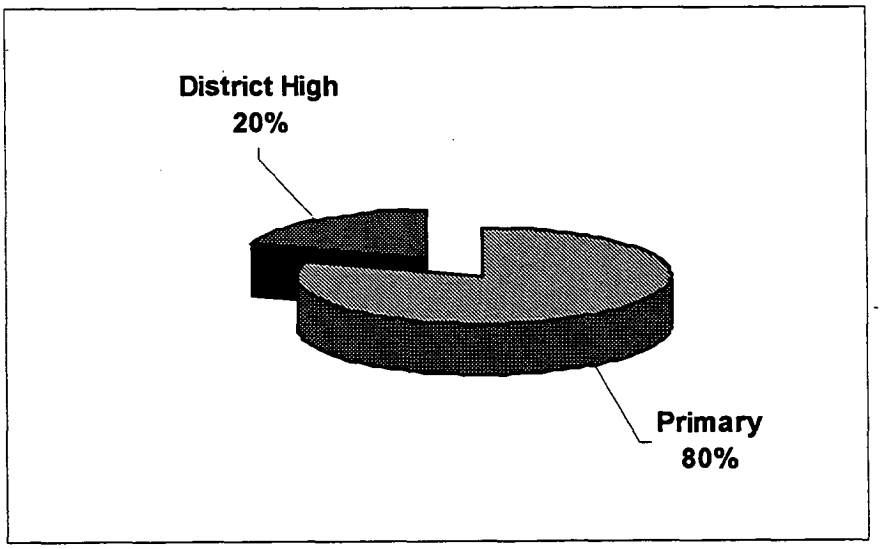

Figure 18. Leaders' type of school

Thirty two school leaders (80%) were involved in primary school locations, whilst eight (20%) were senior staff members in district high schools.

Leaders' Classification

The level of each school leader's leadership position classification was sought and responses are given in Figure 19.

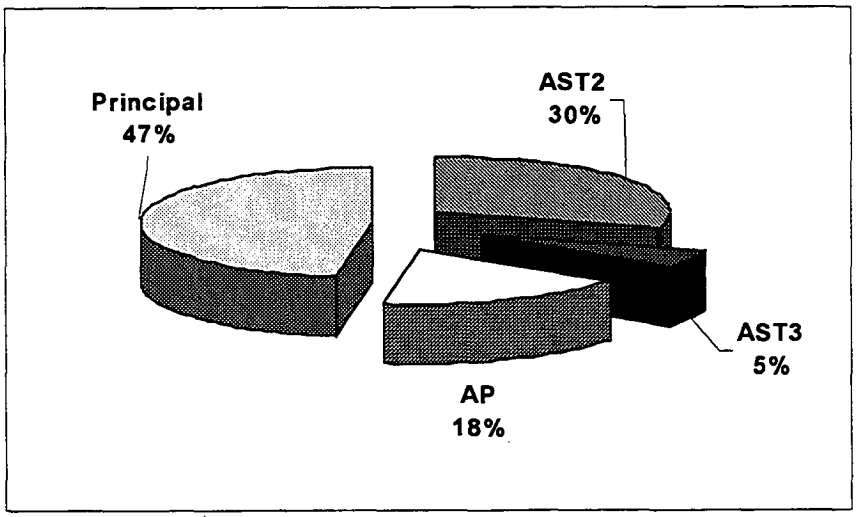

Figure 19. Leaders' classification

Data from this question indicated that 19 responding school leaders (47%) held a Principal classification, 7 were APs (18%), 2 (5%) were AST 3s and 12 (30%) were AST 2s.

Leaders' Gender

Data regarding the responding school leaders' gender are displayed in Figure 20, which indicate that 23 (57%) were female and 17 (43%) were male.

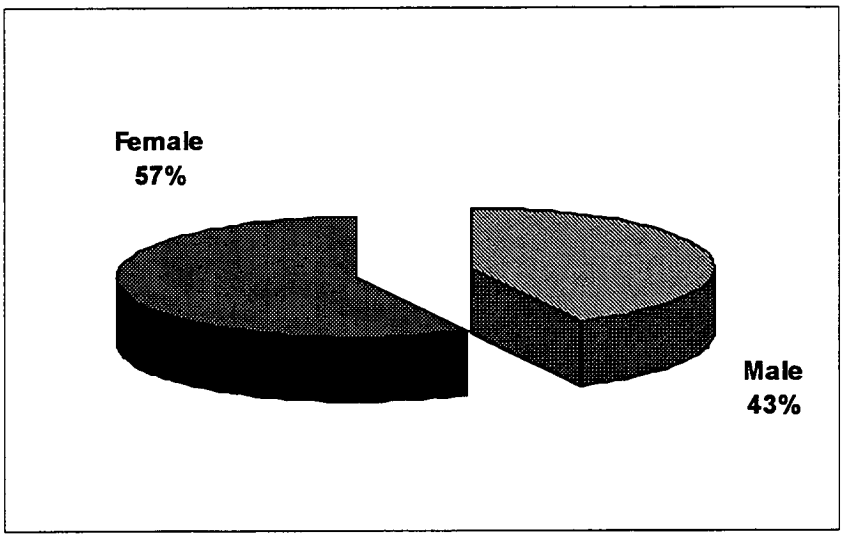

Figure 20. Leaders' gender

Leaders' Perceptions Regarding Important Leadership Factors In K-2

Rating the five most important leadership items in K-2, school leaders' perceptions were scored, with the most important item being given the value of 5, through to the fifth most important item as a 1. The frequency of leaders' responses for each leadership item is shown in Table 17.

The item most frequently named by responding school leaders related to the leaders' demonstration of trust in, and support of, K-2 teachers. Of responding

leaders, 67% named this item and, of these, 35% identified it as their most important aspect.

Important Leadership Items	Frequency	Percent
Demonstrates trust and support of teachers.	27	67
Helps improve teaching practice.	26	65
Shares leadership with K-2 teachers.	24	60
Ensures adequate resource provision for K-2.	22	54
Demonstrates positive leadership presence.	17	43
Encourages innovation by K-2 teachers.	16	40
Promotes commitment to school goals and processes.	15	38
Recognises achievement/involvement of K-2 students and parents.	13	32
Values contributions of K-2 teachers equally.	9	22
Recognises K-2 teachers' performance.	8	20
Leads with energy and by example.	8	20
Attends to K-2 teachers' personal needs.	4	10
Possesses sound conflict and negotiation skills.	4	10
Other aspects	3	8

Table 17. Leaders' responses to most important leadership items in K-2

After demonstrating trust in, and support of, teachers, the next three items specified most frequently by school leaders were those related to helping teachers improve their teaching practice (65%), sharing leadership with K-2 teachers (60%) and ensuring provision of adequate resources for K-2 (55%). The items recorded least frequently by responding school leaders related to the leaders' possession of sound conflict resolution and negotiation skills (10%) and leaders' attention to K-2 teachers' personal needs (10%). Finally, 8% of respondents named an item in the optional section. The aspects named by the leaders were related to development and

articulation of the school's vision, building "overall performance and morale of K-2 teachers" and provision of opportunities for "team planning and PD (grade levels) and reflection".

The mean score was calculated for each of the leadership items and results are summarised in Figure 21.

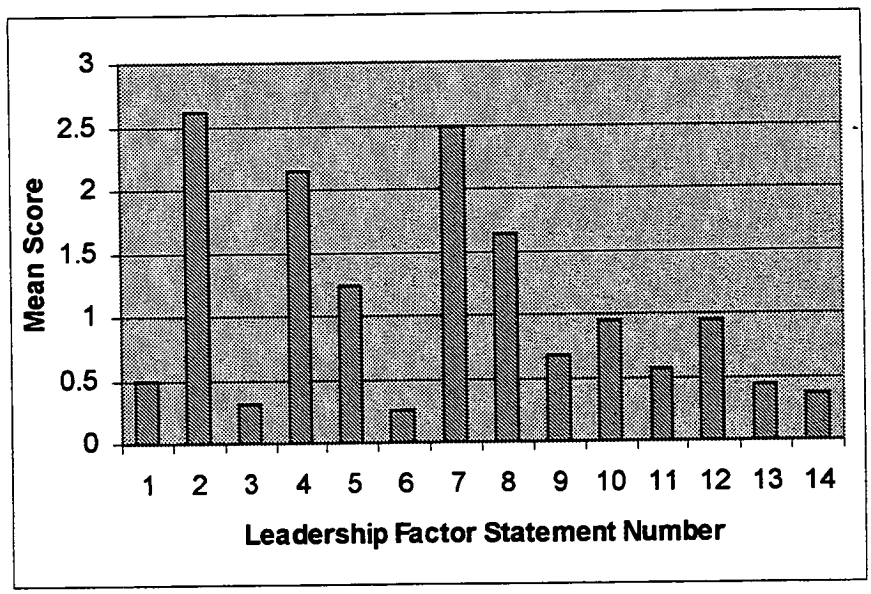

Figure 21. Leaders' perceptions of important leadership items

Responding school leaders rated helping K-2 teachers to improve their teaching practice (Statement 2) highest, with a mean score of 2.6. Demonstration of trust in, and support of, K-2 teachers (Statement 7) rated the next highest at 2.5, followed by shared leadership (Statement 4) at 2.2 and provision of adequate resourcing for K-2 education (Statement 8) at 1.7. The two items with the lowest mean scores were attending to teachers' personal needs (Statement 3) at 0.3 and possession of sound conflict resolution and negotiation skills (Statement 6) at 0.25.

Frequency and mean scores of school leaders' responses concerning the most important leadership items in K-2 education indicate that helping teachers to improve

their teaching practice, demonstrating trust in, and support of, K-2 teachers, as well as sharing leadership with them were perceived to be the key factors.

Leaders' Perceptions of the Most Influential Leadership Sources for K-2 Education in their School

Responses by school leaders to this question were scored to allow analysis of leaders' perceptions of the influence exerted by different leadership sources within schools. A very strong rating scored 3, considerable scored 2 and moderate scored 1. The frequencies with which responding leaders named the leadership sources is presented in Table 18.

Leadership source	Frequency	Percent
Principal	25	61
Assistant Principal	12	30
Advanced Skills Teacher 1	8	20
Advanced Skills Teacher 2	21	52
Advanced Skills Teacher 3	5	11
Teams of K-2 teachers	39	97
Individual classroom teachers	19	47

Table 18. Frequency with which leaders named sources of leadership in K-2

The sources of leadership most frequently named by school leaders were teams of teachers (97% of respondents), the Principal (61%), AST 2 (52%) and individual teachers (47%). The least frequently named source of leadership was AST 1 (11%).

The mean score for each leadership source, which was calculated from school leaders' responses, is shown in Figure 22.

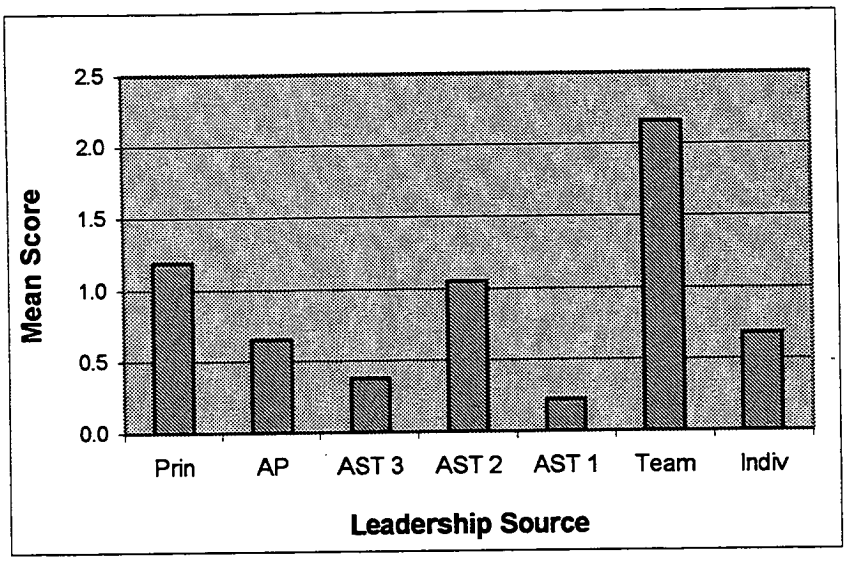

Figure 22. Leaders' influential leadership sources

Responding school leaders highlighted teams of K-2 teachers as the most influential source of leadership, with a mean score of 2.2, whilst the Principal was identified as the second most influential source, with a mean score of 1.2. Responding leaders perceived that AST 1 demonstrate least influence as leaders in K-2, with a mean score of 0.2. AST 3 also received a low mean score, of.0.4. The low incidence of the presence of this classification, in the surveyed schools, would have contributed to the low mean score attained.

Responses concerning the most influential sources of leadership in K-2, as perceived by school leaders, considering frequency and mean scores, indicates that they believe that teams of K-2 teachers, and the school principal hold the greatest influence and that ASTs hold the least influence.

Principals' Perceptions Of Their Role In K-2 Education

It was thought desirable to gain insight into the principals' perceptions regarding their role in K-2 leadership. To do this, and for comparison with the teachers' perceptions of the same matter, principals' responses to 16 of the 56 statements within question 3e of the leaders' survey were considered. The leaders' statements, and the pertinent section of the teachers' survey are listed in Table 19, which shows the frequency and percentage of principals' responses to each item.

Frequencies and percentages indicate that principals' rate Statement 29, "I demonstrate shared decision making processes with K-2 teachers", the highest with 89.5% responding with Strongly Agree, and the remaining 10.5% of principals responding with Agree. Three other statements were rated highly by principals, with 78.8% responding Strongly Agree to both Statement 9, "I empower teachers to take on leadership roles", and Statement 12 "I equally value contributions from all K-2 teachers", and 73.7% responding Strongly Agree to Statement 24, "I demonstrate effective interpersonal skills". Seven of the statements were rated either Strongly Agree or Agree by 100% of responding school principals.

Furthermore, analysis of the negative statements revealed that 33.3% of responding principals agreed with the statement "I am unable to assist K-2 teachers to improve their teaching practices owing to a lack of personal technical knowledge", with 55.6% indicating that they strongly disagreed.

Question Number		Leaders' Responses to Rating Categories							
		Strongly Agree 1		Agree 2		Disagree 3		Strongly Disagree 4	
Principals' Survey State't Number	Teachers' Survey State't Number	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
1	1	9	47.3	9	47.3	1	5.4	0	0
2	2	9	47.3	8	42.1	2	10.6	0	0
8	4	5	29.4	8	42.1	4	23.5	0	0
9	5	15	78.8	4	22.2	0	0	0	0
12	6	15	78.8	4	22.2	0	0	0	0
24	7 *	14	73.7	5	10.5	0	0	0	0
0	8	17	89.5	2	10.5	0	0	0	0
31	9	7	38.9	11	61.1	0	0	0	0
32	10	6	31.6	11	57.9	2	10.5	0	0
40	11	13	72.2	3	16.7	2	11.1	0	0
44	12	10	55.6	7	38.9	1	5.5	0	0
47	13	8	44.4	10	55.6	0	0	0	0
48 *	14 *	0	0	6	33.3	2	11.1	10	55.6
49 *	15 *	0	0	1	5.2	9	47.4	9	47.4
6	16	8	42.1	8	42.1	3	15.8	0	0
54	17	11	57.9	8	0	0	0	0	0

* Negatively-stated item

Table 19: Frequency of principals' responses to the nature of their role in K-2 education.

Mean scores were calculated for each statement. The data obtained are displayed in Figure 23.

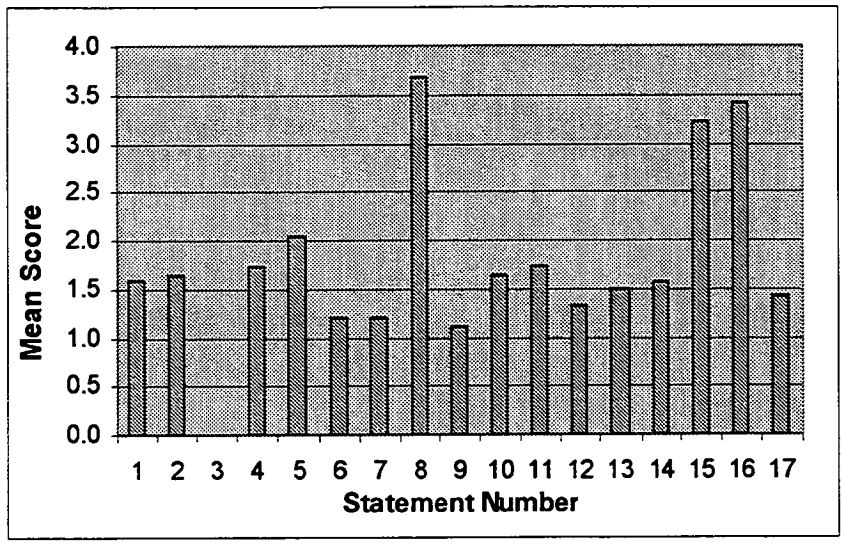

Figure 23. Principals' perceptions of the nature of their role in K-2 education

The three statements rated most highly by principals were: Statement 6, "I equally value contributions from all K-2 teachers", Statement 7, "I demonstrate effective interpersonal skills" (both with a mean score of 1.21) and Statement 9, "I provide recognition for special work completed by K-2 teachers" (with a mean score of 1.11). All positively worded statements had a mean score in the Strongly Agree or Agree categories, less than 2.5, although Statement 8, "I demonstrate shared decision making processes with K-2 teachers" (mean score of 2.06) showed only marginal agreement. All negatively stated items had a mean score in the Disagree or Strongly Disagree categories.

In summary, the principals' perceptions of their role in K-2 education indicated that they perceived their strengths to be in equity, recognition, and interpersonal skills, in relation to early childhood teachers.

Leaders' Perceptions Regarding the Nature of their Leadership Role in K-2 Education

The 56 statements, regarding the nature of the leadership role provided by school leaders in K-2, were analysed. The mean score of leaders' responses for each statement are presented in Table 20.

Statement Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Mean Score	1.58	1.70	3.79	1.30	1.30	1.55	1.52	1.67

Statement Number	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Mean Score	1.36	1.33	1.40	1.35	2.83	1.40	1.73	1.38

Statement Number	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Mean Score	1.53	2.08	1.45	1.59	1.44	1.92	1.56	1.30

Statement Number	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
Mean Score	1.18	1.38	1.90	3.65	1.18	1.78	1.64	1.85

Statement Number	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
Mean Score	1.62	1.70	2.95	1.74	1.35	1.51	1.33	1.41

Statement Number	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
Mean Score	1.52	1.53	3.28	1.44	3.37	1.48	1.51	3.41

Statement Number	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56
Mean Score	3.46	1.81	1.51	2.90	2.13	1.45	1.15	3.69

Table 20. Mean scores of leaders' perceptions of the nature of their role in K-2 education

The items most strongly supported by school leaders were Statement 55, "I respect opinions of K-2 teachers" (mean score of 1.15), Statement 25, "I consult with K-2 teachers when initiating actions that will affect their work" (mean score of 1.18) and Statement 29, "I demonstrate shared decision making processes with K-2 teachers" (mean score of 1.18).

No positively stated items received a mean score greater that 2.50, which in effect, would indicate the statement falls into the Disagree rating. However, Statement 18, "I inform K-2 teachers of what high teaching performance means", received a mean score of 2.08, indicating that leaders had marginal agreement with this item.

All negatively stated items had a mean score greater than 2.50. The negative statements with the highest mean scores were Statement 3, "I don't encourage K-2 teachers to work towards school goals" (mean score of 3.79), Statement 56, "I encourage K-2 teachers to work alone in their teaching" (mean score of 3.69), and Statement 28 "I discourage contributions from K-2 teachers" (mean score of 3.65).

On consideration of these results, it is evident that school leaders perceive that they demonstrate respect and utilise shared leadership and consultative procedures with K-2 teachers, within their leadership role in early childhood education.

The Qualitative Results From Leaders' Survey Responses

Results of the qualitative data are presented, in relation to leaders' views regarding the greatest challenges for K-2 education, whether lack of early childhood training limits the effectiveness of K-2 leaders, and perceptions of their leadership strengths, weaknesses and primary leadership tasks in K-2.

Leaders' Views Regarding the Greatest Challenges for K-2 Leaders

Leaders' responses were coded into five categories: Change; Parents; Knowledge; Relationships; and Organisational Issues. The responses, within these categories, are summarised in Table 21.

Greatest Challenges For K-2 Leaders	Percentage	Frequency
CHANGE	39.8	41
• Procedural/accountability issues	5.8	6
• Resourcing	3.9	4
• Educational	21.4	22
• Teachers & children	8.7	9
PARENTS	6.8	7
• Expectations	1.9	2
• Utilisation	4.9	5
KNOWLEDGE	15.5	16
• Leaders	2.9	3
• Teachers	2.9	3
• General awareness	9.7	10
RELATIONSHIPS	8.7	9
• Teachers	5.8	6
• Children	1.9	2
• Parents	1.0	1
ORGANISATIONAL	29.1	30
• Time	10.7	11
• Equity	2.9	3
• School requirements	10.7	11
• Departmental requirements	4.8	5

Table 21. Leaders' Responses Concerning the Greatest Challenges for K-2 Leaders

Of leaders' responses, 21% were concerned with educational change issues, these being seen as the major challenges for school leaders in K-2 education. The educational change matters raised by school leaders were diverse in nature, but one key factor was raised by 25% of responding leaders. This matter related to the overcrowded curriculum and the need to clarify what is of central importance in K-2 teaching and learning. Responses by two leaders capture the nature of educational changes being experienced in K-2 education, when they state that the key challenges are "providing the correct balance in the curriculum without placing too great a demand on the children" and "balancing the crowded curriculum and time constraints i.e. dedicated time for Maths, Flying Start, PE, Music etc".

As an organisational issue, time was mentioned in 11% of leaders' responses. As one leader, an AST 2, commented, the greatest challenge related to "time factors – as teaching load increases, leadership decreases". An Assistant Principal noted that K-2 educational leadership is about "time management and working smarter, not harder".

A further 11% of leaders' responses, in the Organisational Issues category, were concerned with school requirement matters. One leader, an AST 2, noted that the greatest challenge is "to convince those who are not EC trained that classes need to be of a reasonable size, despite the intervention in the form of Flying Start".

In addition, 10% of responses, related to the Knowledge category, were concerned with raising school and community awareness about K-2 education. This type of challenge is captured by an Assistant Principal, who stated that senior staff positions in ECE need to be justified with K-6 school organisation as, at present, "K-2 leadership is seen as a backward step or unnecessary". Another perspective was raised by an AST 2, who commented that the challenge related to "recognition by

school leadership, school bodies and community at large that early childhood teachers are professionals".

The impact of change on teachers and students was an item in 9% of leaders' responses. A principal claimed that "leaders need to protect teachers from unrealistic and impossible demands from politicians, parents etc whilst articulating the role of schooling". Another principal noted that the greatest challenge was keeping the children's best interests "at heart" because "some of the philosophically sound aspects of K-2 are being challenged by political, rather than educational decisions".

In conclusion, school leaders' responses were related to aspects of educational change, raising the general awareness of the school and community about the importance of K-2 education, and organisational issues, related to time and school requirements.

Leaders' Responses to Whether a Lack of Early Childhood Training Limits the Effectiveness of K-2 Leaders

With respect to the "Yes/No" section of the question related to the effect upon K-2 leadership of the lack of early childhood training, 21 leaders responded in the affirmative and 14 in the negative, with 10 of the negative responses coming form school principals. Five leaders failed to record a "Yes" or "No", but when later responses from these were analysed, all could be effectively categorised as "No".

Analysis of the open-ended responses to this question, provided by leaders, allowed further coding. Of responses, 50% were negative and related to four key aspects: the generic nature of leadership skills, leaders' ongoing learning, basic knowledge of children's development, and shared leadership. The frequencies and percentages related to responses to this question are shown in Figure 24.

Also, 20% of responses indicated that leadership skills are generic in nature and therefore specialised training in the specific EC area was not necessary. Three of the leaders' responses related to this aspect were: "leadership is about 'enabling' others to perform their duties to full potential – you as leader need to provide opportunities – not do it yourself", and "good leadership can cover all sectors", and "it is more to do with personality and valuing staff contribution".

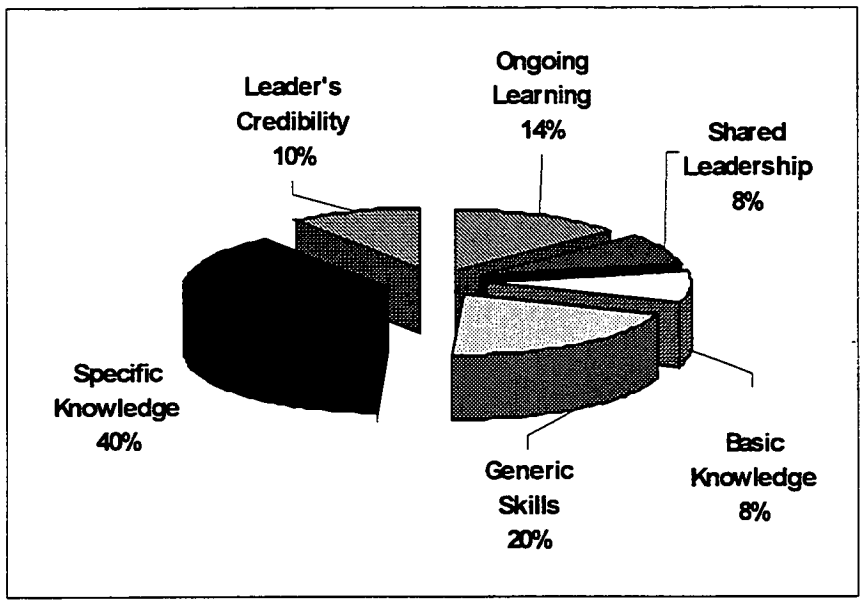

Figure 24. Leaders' responses regarding the effect of lack of early childhood training on K-2 leadership

From leaders responding in the negative, 14% of responses referred to the need for leaders to be engaged in ongoing learning in their field of leadership. As one leader stated "as a primary trained EC leader, I have 're-trained' on the job over a large number of years", whilst another leader commented "no – is conditional upon the leader being a continual learner who will commit herself to building an understanding of the special characteristics of children in the EC grades".

The other two categories of shared leadership and basic knowledge of children's development each received 8% of responses. One principal captures the nature of the responses related to shared leadership in this quote "with shared responsibilities and team structures by all K-2 teachers, a school leader can develop structures to support and inform them as they gain experience in the role". In the other instance, the fact that leaders should have attained a sound understanding of child development (birth to adult) was a response provided. As one principal noted, "no – provided that the specific training is properly placed in the context of the children's total education".

The 21 leaders who responded "Yes" to the question had two key themes in their responses. These were related to issues of leaders' credibility and specific knowledge. The need for specific knowledge of K-2 teaching and learning principles was highlighted in 40% of leaders' responses. Reasons given regarding the importance of this knowledge are included in the following leaders' quotes: "early childhood training provides expertise in a specialized area. Young children have quite different needs within the school setting and this affects financial, human and material resourcing", and "those without specific EC training are unaware of the very egocentric nature of young children, their demands, needs and the importance of support in the form of teacher aide". Furthermore, other leaders stated that "from my experience, many primary trained senior staff are 'afraid' of young children and are quite happy to hand the management of ECE programs over to the specifically trained person", and "EC differs in many ways from primary-age students and therefor (sic) the classroom practice, behaviour management must be age appropriate". One principal concluded her remarks to this question with "it is depth of knowledge re EC that I notice to be lacking in some of my leadership colleagues (principals and at Central Office)".

The second aspect of affirmative responses related to issues of leaders' credibility where they are lacking in EC specialisation. One principal commented "successful leaders need to be credible and they need to have expertise in their K-2 leadership role", as did an AST 3, "I think credibility is also an issue (with early childhood teachers)".

In conclusion, the negative responses provided by school leaders related to four items, the generic nature of leadership skills, leaders' ongoing learning, shared leadership, and the fact that all teachers have a basic knowledge of child development (K-12). In relation to the affirmative responses, the two issues raised by leaders concerned the specific knowledge of K-2 education, and leaders' credibility with other EC teachers and the school community, pointing to the necessity for K-2 leaders having a specialisation in EC education.

Leaders' Perceptions of their Leadership Strengths in K-2 Education

Responses from K-2 leaders were coded, according to the nature of their perceptions of their leadership strengths, into four categories: Vision and Team Building; School and Community Relationships; Instructional Issues; and, High Performance. The frequencies and percentages of these coded responses are shown in Table 22.

The two categories of responses which attracted the highest frequency were Vision and Team Building (35.6% of responses) and School and Community Relationships (31.8%). The leadership strength raised most frequently within these categories by K-2 leaders, with 13.0% of responses, was interpersonal skills. Ten leaders referred to their people skills, whilst nine referred to their ability to listen.

Leaders' Perceived Strengths in K-2	Frequency	Percentage
VISION AND TEAM BUILDING	74	35.6
• Energy	22	10.6
• Presence	3	1.4
• Shared leadership	9	4.3
• Equity	9	4.3
• Risk taking	7	3.4
• Evaluation	5	2.4
• Collaboration	7	3.4
• Team building	12	5.8
SCHOOL & COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS	66	31.8
• Parents	7	3.4
• Pastoral care	5	2.4
• Trust	4	1.9
• Conflict skills	4	1.9
• Interpersonal skills	27	13.0
• Consultation	1	0.5
• Interest	2	1.0
• Support	16	7.7
INSTRUCTIONAL	33	15.9
• Assistance	1	0.5
• Professional development	5	2.4
• Knowledge	21	10.1
• Innovation	5	2.4
• Initiative	1	0.5
PERFORMANCE RELATED	35	16.7
• Recognition	5	2.4
• Resources	3	1.4
• High performance	9	4.3
• Empowerment	4	1.9
• Organisational skills	13	6.2
• Administrative skills	1	0.5

Table 22. Leaders' perceptions of their leadership strengths in K-2

The second most significant strength in leadership related to energy in the role, with 10.6% of leaders' responses referring to this aspect. Words used by leaders to encapsulate this aspect were "enthusiasm", "drive", "commitment", "motivation", and "vision for K-2". As one principal stated, this strength is about "being prepared to have a vision for K-2 education and fight for it".

The third most recorded response was found in the Instructional category and related to the leaders' knowledge of K-2, with 10.1% of responses being recorded. One AST 3 leader commented that she had "confidence and knowledge in the K-2 area", whilst five other leaders expressed that they possessed knowledge related to the special needs of K-2 children, and four leaders remarked on the theoretical and practical nature of their knowledge of K-6.

The fourth most frequently named strength in leadership was support, with 16 leaders referring to this aspect. Leaders' specified that they believed their strength was in support of teachers in 7.7% of their responses, and as one principal noted "I hang in there with my staff".

The other two leadership strengths most frequently named by K-2 leaders were organisational issues (response rate of 6.2%), and team building (response rate of 5.8%). As one principal stated one of her strengths lay in her "ability to support others in leading, risk taking, learning".

The three strengths least frequently named by leaders were in administration, consultation, and assistance for teachers, each attracting 0.5% of responses. The high level of administrative tasks being undertaken by school leaders, were referred to by one principal who commented, "in an effort to protect teachers from administrivia etc a culture of 'my work load is too great' has developed".

Overall, the K-2 leaders in this study indicated that their major leadership strengths lay in interpersonal skills, knowledge of K-2 education, energy in leadership, support of teachers, and competence in organisational matters.

Leaders' Perceptions of their Leadership Weaknesses in K-2 Education

Responses from K-2 leaders were coded, according to the nature of their perceptions related to leaders' weaknesses in leadership, into the categories of Vision and Team Building, School and Community Relationships, Instructional Issues, and High Performance. Table 23 summarises leaders' responses.

The category, which attracted the most responses, was High Performance, with 34.5% of responses. Of these responses, issues related to organisational skills were in 23.8% of responses from school leaders. Time management and pressure associated with time imperatives, were named by these leaders. As one principal noted his weakness was in "lack of attention to 'Dept Administrivia'", whilst an AP commented she felt there was "lack of time to attend to things properly (I'm spread too thinly over 16 classes K-6)".

The second category, which attracted 26.2% of responses, was Instructional Issues, with 11.2% of leaders' responses referring to deficits in knowledge of K-2 education. Inexperience in K-2 education was a concern of some leaders and quotes such as the following capture this: "My personal leadership weaknesses are limited experience as a K-2 teacher", and "others' perceptions of my credibility and/or leadership strengths in K-2 education are a concern for me and could be seen as a weakness".

Leaders' Perceived Weaknesses In K-2	Frequency	Percentage
VISION AND TEAM BUILDING	16	19.0
• Presence	4	4.8
• Shared leadership	1	1.2
• Equity	1	1.2
• Risk taking	5	5.9
• Evaluation	5	5.9
SCHOOL & COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS	17	20.2
• Pastoral Care	3	3.6
• Conflict Skills	5	5.9
• Interpersonal Skills	6	7.1
• Accessibility	2	2.4
• Support	1	1.2
INSTRUCTIONAL	19	22.6
• Professional Development	1	1.2
• Knowledge	10	11.9
• Feedback	7	8.3
• Innovation	1	1.2
PERFORMANCE RELATED	32	38.1
• Recognition	3	3.6
• Resources	2	2.4
• High Performance	2	2.4
• Organisational Skills	20	23.8
• Administrative Skills	5	5.9

Table 23. Leaders' perceptions of their leadership weaknesses in K-2

Feedback was also a perceived weakness in the Instructional category, with 8.3% of responses. The two key aspects, highlighted by these school leaders, were their poor skills in following up issues and in reacting to teachers' poor teaching performance. The following quotes, from a principal, an AP, and an AST 2 leader respectively, indicate this area of weakness. "I'm not good at reacting to poor performance", and "it is sometimes difficult to be honest with failing teachers" and

"addressing individual teachers who are ineffective in particular aspects of their teaching is my weakness".

In the School and Community Relationships category (20.2% of responses), interpersonal skills were named as weaknesses in leadership in 7.1% of leaders' responses. Words used by school leaders to describe their interpersonal skill weaknesses were "bossy", "cynical", "intolerant", "lacking in sensitivity" and "impatient".

The least frequently named leadership weaknesses by school leaders were in relation to innovation, professional development, support, equity and shared leadership, all attracting 1.2% of responses.

In conclusion, school leaders perceived their weaknesses in K-2 leadership to be in organisational skills, knowledge of K-2 education, feedback processes, and interpersonal skills.

Leaders' Responses Identifying Primary Leadership Tasks Undertaken in K-2 Education

Leaders listed their primary leadership tasks in K-2 with these responses being coded into six categories: Program Management, Personnel Management, Management of Professional Development, Presence, School Policy/Curriculum Management, and General Operational Management. The frequencies of leaders' responses are presented in Table 24.

The two categories of primary leadership tasks, most frequently cited by responding leaders, were Personnel Management (30.6% of responses), and General Operational Management (26.7%). Teacher-related aspects of personnel management were most frequently named by school leaders, with 20.7% of

responses. Respondents nominated support and pastoral care of teachers within these tasks. Of leaders' responses, 7.4% were related to student issues, with disciplinary action being mentioned frequently as a task performed by leaders.

Primary Leadership Tasks in K-2 Education	Frequency	Percent
PROGRAM MANAGEMENT	21	10.4
• Flying Start	13	6.4
• Special Needs	8	4.0
PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT	63	30.6
• Teacher Related	42	20.7
• Student Related	15	7.4
• Parent Related	6	2.5
MANAGEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	28	13.9
• Organising	17	8.4
• Leading	4	2.0
• Assessing Needs	7	3.5
PRESENCE	15	7.4
• At school	10	4.9
• In community	5	2.5
SCHOOL POLICY/CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT	22	10.9
• Development	2	0.9
• Implementation	7	3.5
• Evaluation	9	4.5
• Other	4	2.0
GENERAL OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT	54	26.7
• Documentation	3	1.5
• Resourcing – Personnel & Physical	14	6.9
• Delegation of Tasks	14	6.9
• Day to Day Operation	23	11.4

Table 24. Leaders' perceptions of the primary leadership tasks undertaken in relation to K-2 education

Day to Day Routine Operations were named in 11.4% of leaders' responses, within the category of General Operational Management. Leaders referred to tasks such as running team meetings, providing release time for AST 2, "trouble shooting", ensuring smooth operation of the school, and managing change and conflict within their routine school management tasks. Tasks involving resourcing and delegation each accounted for 6.9% of responses from leaders. Resourcing tasks named by leaders were primarily associated with personnel issues, whilst delegation responsibilities were related to supporting teams to work on K-2 issues.

The third category, most frequently named according to school leaders, related to management of professional development, with 13.9% of responses received. Organising professional development was a task cited in 8.4% of the leaders' responses. The least frequently cited tasks related to the leaders' presence at school (4.9% of responses), and in the community (2.5% of responses).

In summary, school leaders perceived that their primary tasks in relation to K-2 education were personnel management of teachers and students, and general operational management involving delegation, resourcing, and day to day operation of the school.

Comparative Analysis of Leaders' and Teachers' Data

Comparative analysis was undertaken to establish similarities and differences between data received from the two groups, K-2 teachers and K-2 school leaders, involved in the study.

Comparison of Demographic Information

Demographic data, received from school leaders and K-2 teachers in this study, were analysed and compared in regard to qualifications, teaching specialisations, school type, and gender issues. A summary of this data is shown in Table 25.

Respondents' Demographic Data	Teachers' %	Leaders' %
QUALIFICATIONS:		
• 3 Year Trained	0	3
• TTC + Other	37	10
• B Ed	27	28
• B Ed + TTC + Other	34	20
• 2 Degrees	2	39
SPECIALISATION:		
• Early Childhood	73	38
• Primary	17	44
• Secondary	1	8
• Physical Education	3	10
• Other	6	0
SCHOOL TYPE:		
• District High	12	20
• Primary	88	80
GENDER:		
• Male	1	43
• Female	99	57

Table 25. Teachers' and leaders' demographic data

Table 25 shows that, for survey respondents, leaders are more highly qualified than teachers, with 39% of leaders holding 2 degrees compared to only 2% of teachers. However, more teachers (34%) hold a combination of B Ed, TTC, and other qualification (diploma or certificate) than leaders (20%) in the same category.

In relation to responding teachers' and leaders' areas of teaching specialisation, two major differences are apparent. Of teachers, 73% were trained in early childhood, compared to 38% of school leaders, whilst 44% of leaders had a primary

specialisation, compared to 17% of teachers. In addition, 62% of leaders held a teaching specialisation in primary, secondary or physical education, compared to 21% of teachers who had similar specialisations.

Results for school types were similar in nature, with 12% of responding teachers teaching in a district high school compared to 20% of the leaders. Major variations were evident in relation to gender. Of responding leaders, 43% were male, compared with 57% being female, whilst 99% of teachers in the study were females, compared with only 1% of males.

In summary, differences are evident between teachers and leaders in this study in relation to qualifications, training specialisation, and gender. Leaders were more highly qualified, although more teachers held an early childhood teaching specialisation, and finally, a closer balance in gender was more apparent in responding school leaders than teachers.

Comparison of Perceptions of Important Leadership Factors in K-2

Responding teachers' and leaders' perceptions of the important leadership factors for K-2 education were compared, with the percentage of respondents who referred to each factor shown in Table 26.

The factor named most frequently by teachers and leaders was "demonstrates trust and support of teachers", being referred to by 74% of teachers and 67% of leaders. The next most frequently named leadership factor was "ensures adequate resource provision for K-2", with 67% of teachers and 54% of leaders indicating that this was of importance in leadership for K-2 education.

Three leadership factors revealed major differences between the frequency in teachers' and leaders' responses. These were "shares leadership with others" (teachers 27% and leaders 60%), "promotes commitment to school goals and processes" (teachers 18% and leaders 38%) and "possesses sound conflict and negotiation skills" (teachers 29% and leaders 10%). Two factors were referred to by both groups of respondents with similar frequencies. These leadership factors were "recognises achievement/involvement of K-2 students and parents" (teachers 28% and leaders 32%), and "demonstrates trust and support of teachers" (teachers 74% and leaders 67%).

Important Leadership Factor in K-2	**Teachers' %**	**Leaders' %**
Demonstrates trust and support of teachers.	74	67
Helps improve teaching practice.	50	65
Shares leadership with K-2 teachers.	27	60
Ensures adequate resource provision for K-2.	67	54
Demonstrates positive leadership presence.	53	43
Encourages innovation by K-2 teachers.	25	40
Promotes commitment to school goals and processes.	18	38
Recognises achievement/involvement of K-2 students and parents.	28	32
Values contributions of K-2 teachers equally.	35	22
Recognises K-2 teachers' performance.	30	20
Leads with energy and by example.	35	20
Attends to K-2 teachers' personal needs.	16	10
Possesses sound conflict and negotiation skills.	29	10
Other aspects	4	8

Table 26. Teachers' and leaders' responses to most important leadership factors in K-2

To further the analysis of responses in this area, comparisons were made between the teachers' and leaders' average scores for each leadership factor, in order to highlight any similarities and differences. The data related to average scores are shown in Figure 25

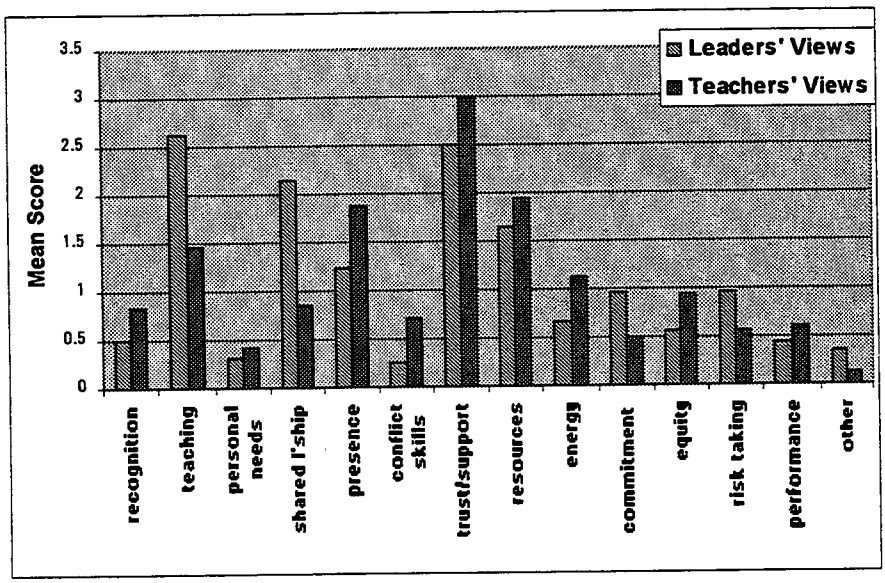

Figure 25. Teachers' and leaders' perceptions of important leadership factors

Responding teachers and leaders rated the majority of leadership factors in a similar manner, with the differences between average scores for these factors lying within a range of 0.1 to 0.5. However, two factors received notably different average scores from responding teachers and leaders. Leadership factor 4, "shares leadership with K-2 teachers", received average scores of 2.2 from leaders and 0.8 from teachers, indicating that responding leaders rate the importance of shared leadership much more highly, as a leadership factor, than responding teachers. The other leadership factor, observed to have a major difference in average scores, was factor 2 "helps to improve teaching practice in K-2". Leaders, with an average score of 2.6, again rated this leadership factor more highly than teachers, with an average score of 1.4.

The leadership factor with the lowest average score, from both leaders and teachers, was factor 3 "attends to K-2 teachers' personal needs". The average scores for this factor were 0.3, according to responding leaders, and 0.4 for responding teachers.

The three highest scored factors by teachers were factor 7, "demonstrates trust in, and support of, K-2 teachers" (average score of 2.9), factor 8, "ensures adequate resource provision for K-2 programs" (average score of 1.9) and factor 5, "demonstrates a positive leadership presence in K-2" (average score of 1.8). Responding leaders scored factor 2, "helps improve teaching practice in K-2", as the most important (average score of 2.6), followed by factor 7, "demonstrates trust in, and support of, K-2 teachers" (average score of 2.5), and factor 4, "shares leadership with K-2 teachers" (average score of 2.1).

Comparison of these results indicates that responding groups of leaders and teachers both value the importance of trust and support for teachers. However, the factor related to shared leadership was of a much lower priority for teachers than leaders, as was helping to improve teaching practice. Furthermore, average scores indicated that responding teachers placed greater value upon a positive leadership presence in K-2 than leaders.

In summary, leaders' and teachers' perceptions, regarding identification of important leadership factors in relation to K-2 education, indicate that both groups place high value on the importance of trust and support in K-2 leadership. However, major differences are also apparent. Leaders place high priority on improving teaching practice and shared leadership, whilst teachers value positive leadership and provision of adequate resources for K-2.

Comparison of Perceptions of the Most Influential Sources of Leadership for K-2

Responding teachers' and leaders' perceptions, regarding the levels of influence exerted by sources of leadership available within their schools, were analysed and compared. Table 27 shows the frequencies (expressed as percentages) with which each of the sources of leadership were named by the two groups of respondents.

Sources of K-2 Leadership	Leaders' %	Teachers %
Principal	61	48
Assistant Principal	30	38
Advanced Skills Teacher 1	20	13
Advanced Skills Teacher 2	52	43
Advanced Skills Teacher 3	11	12
Teams of K-2 teachers	97	71
Individual classroom teachers	47	67

Table 27. Teachers' and leaders' responses to sources of K-2 leadership

The source of leadership most frequently named by both school leaders and teachers was teams of K-2 teachers. However, the 'degree of support' for this source varied by 26% between the two groups, from 71% of teachers to an almost unanimous 97% of leaders. The two factors named next most frequently by the two groups were also common, but in reversed order for responding teachers and leaders. 67% of responding teachers named individual classroom teachers next, 20% greater than the leaders' response at 40%, which placed it third for their group. Responding

teachers rated the principal as their third most important K-2 leadership source, being referred to in 48% of responses, while this source rated second highest for leaders, being named by 61% of respondents (13% greater than the teachers' group).

The mean score for each leadership source, calculated from teachers' and leaders' responses to allow further analysis of the perceived influential sources of leadership within the schools in the study, is shown in Figure 26.

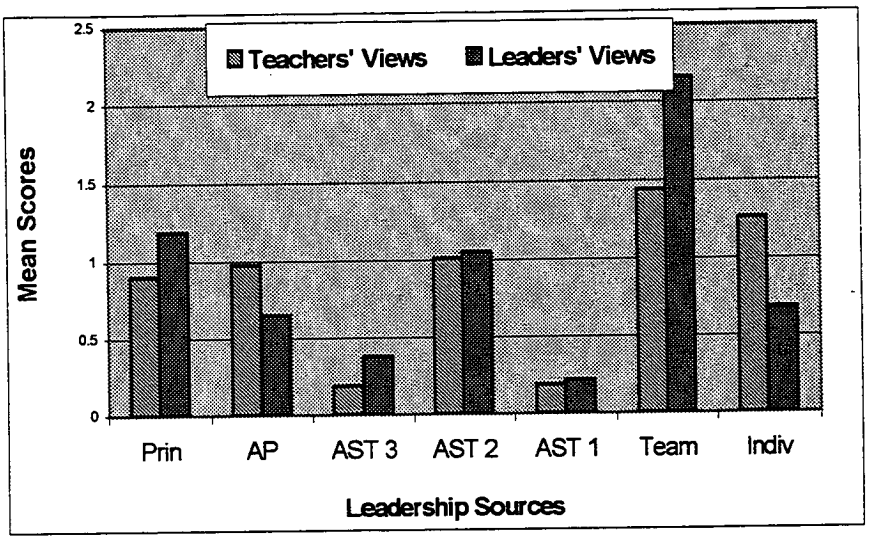

Figure 26. Teachers' and leaders' influential leadership sources

Based upon mean scores, the most influential source of educational leadership for K-2 was perceived, by both responding teachers and leaders, to be teams of K-2 teachers. The mean score for teams was 2.2 from leaders and 1.4 from teachers, indicating that although teachers valued teams as an important source of leadership, they did not do so as highly as the leaders.

A major difference was apparent between responding teachers' and leaders' perceptions, regarding the level of importance placed on individual classroom teachers as a source of leadership. This leadership source scored an average of 1.3

according to teachers' perceptions, whilst leaders' scores averaged 0.7, indicating that responding teachers considered this group to have considerable influence.

Responding leaders (mean score of 1.2) rated the principal more influential than teachers (mean score of 0.9) did. In considering the influence of the various senior staff positions, it was recognised that score results would have been influenced by the classifications present in the various respondents' schools. To negate the effect of this classification distribution, comparison of the sums of the average scores for these groups (AP, AST 3, AST 2, AST 1) indicates similar perceptions by responding teachers and leaders, with totalled average scores of 2.4 and 2.3, respectively.

In summary, after consideration has been given to the frequencies and average scores, related to the most influential sources of leadership for K-2 education, leaders and teachers in this study agreed that teams of K-2 teachers provide a strong leadership influence in early childhood. However, leaders placed less credence on the leadership role provided by classroom teachers than teachers.

Comparison of Teachers' and Principals' Perceptions of the Principals' Role in K-2 Education

The mean scores of principals' and teachers' responses, regarding the nature of the principal's role in K-2 education, are shown in Table 28.

Results comparing the mean scores for the seventeen statements, related to the nature of the principal's role in K-2 education, indicate clear differences between how principals and teachers perceive the leadership role. The statement with the closest mean scores was 5, "empowers K-2 teachers to take on leadership roles", with the principals' mean being 1.94 and the teachers' mean being 2.01. Another

statement with near agreement was 12, "trusts K-2 teachers to teach effectively", with principals' mean score being 1.39 and the teachers' being 1.54.

Principals' Role in K-2: Statement No.	Teachers' Mean Score	Principals' Mean Score
1	2.26	1.58
2	2.56	1.63
3	2.39	-
4	2.51	1.74
5	2.01	1.94
6	1.99	1.21
7	3.07	1.21
8	2.07	1.26
9	2.16	1.11
10	2.27	1.61
11	2.27	1.79
12	1.54	1.39
13	2.23	1.50
14	2.64	1.56
15	2.93	3.22
16	2.54	3.42
17	2.14	1.42

Table 28. Teachers' and principals' responses on the nature of the principal's role in K-2 education

Furthermore, considerable differences in mean scores (greater than 1.00) were noted in Statement 14, "is unable to assist K-2 teachers to improve their teaching practices owing to a personal lack of technical knowledge", with mean scores of 2.64 for teachers and 1.56 for leaders. The same can be said for Statement 9, "provides recognition for special work completed by K-2 teachers", where teachers recorded a mean score of 2.16 with the mean score for leaders being 1.11.

Differences, of greater that 0.8, in mean scores for teachers and principals, were also noted in three other statements. These were Statement 2, "provides information on current educational thought in early childhood education to K-2 teachers" (teachers with 2.55 and leaders with 1.63), Statement 16, "leads K-2 teachers by personal example" (teachers with 2.54 and leaders with 3.42), and Statement 8, "demonstrates shared decision making processes with K-2 teachers" (teachers with 2.08 and leaders with 1.26). The difference noted in Statement 7 relates to the fact that teachers were presented with this item as a negative statement, whilst leaders were confronted by a positive statement.

In summary, teachers' and leaders' perceptions of the principal's role in K-2 education differ in relation to recognition for work completed, the technical knowledge of the principal, shared decision making processes, and leadership by example.

Comparison of Perceptions of the Nature of the K-2 Leadership Role

The responses to the 56 statements, regarding the nature of the leadership role provided by school leaders, were comparatively analysed and the results are shown, as mean scores for the statements, in Table 29.

Considering these results, one statement (Statement 8, "possesses a sound knowledge of K-2 education") received a similar mean score from both leaders and teachers. Three statements had only marginal differences in mean score and these were Statement 30, "establishes productive personal working relationships with parents in K-2 classes" (0.03 difference in mean scores), Statement 36, "has the capacity to overcome most challenges arising in respect to early childhood" (0.03

difference in mean scores) and Statement 20 "earns the respect of K-2 teachers" (0.04 difference in mean scores).

Statement Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Leaders' Mean Score	1.58	1.70	1.21	1.30	1.30	1.55	1.52	1.67
Teachers' Mean Score	1.64	1.91	1.48	1.44	1.61	1.65	1.78	1.67

Statement Number	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Leaders' Mean Score	1.36	1.33	1.40	1.35	2.68	1.40	1.58	1.38
Teachers' Mean Score	2.02	1.54	1.62	1.66	2.22	1.82	1.90	1.53

Statement Number	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Leaders' Mean Score	1.53	2.08	1.45	1.59	1.44	1.92	1.56	1.30
Teachers' Mean Score	1.84	2.35	1.82	1.63	1.90	2.09	1.95	1.59

Statement Number	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
Leaders' Mean Score	1.18	1.38	1.90	1.35	1.18	1.78	1.64	1.85
Teachers' Mean Score	1.73	1.77	2.03	1.45	1.82	1.81	1.88	2.10

Statement Number	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
Leaders' Mean Score	1.62	1.70	2.05	1.74	1.35	1.51	1.33	1.41
Teachers' Mean Score	1.74	1.77	1.79	1.77	1.82	2.02	1.72	1.70

Statement Number	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
Leaders' Mean Score	1.53	1.53	1.72	1.44	1.62	1.48	1.51	1.38
Teachers' Mean Score	1.60	1.66	2.01	1.60	1.59	1.79	1.98	1.60

Statement Number	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56
Leaders' Mean Score	1.54	1.81	1.51	2.90	2.13	1.45	1.15	1.31
Teachers' Mean Score	1.79	1.90	1.80	3.16	1.84	2.02	1.59	1.94

Table 29. Teachers' and leaders' perceptions regarding the nature of the K-2 leadership role

Notable differences in mean scores were apparent between leaders' and teachers' responses for many of the statements. Four items showed a difference in

mean scores, between responding teachers and leaders which was greater than 0.60. These statements were: 9 "empowers K-2 teachers to take on leadership roles" (mean score difference of 0.66), 29 "I demonstrate shared decision making with processes with K-2 teachers" (mean score difference of 0.64), and 56 "finds it difficult to regularly discuss classroom activities with K-2 teachers" (mean score difference of 0.63).

Whilst comparing these results, it was observed that, for 53 of the 56 statements, leaders' responses consistently scored at a higher rating than teachers' responses for the same statements (ie leaders agreed more strongly with positive statements or disagreed more strongly with negative statements).

In summary, the results show broad agreement between leaders' and teachers' responses related to assisting teachers with their teaching, the leader's knowledge level of K-2 education, capacity to overcome challenges, and productive working relationships with parents. However, differences between the two responding groups are apparent in relation to high performance issues, shared leadership, shared decision making processes, and time available for principals and other leaders to talk to teachers.

Comparison of the Views on the Greatest Challenges for Leaders in K-2

Comparison of teachers' and leaders' views, regarding the greatest challenges for K-2 leaders, was completed following classification of responses into five categories, these being Change, Parents, Knowledge, Relationships, and Organisational Issues. The comparative data are presented in Table 30.

Key Challenges For K-2 Leaders	Leaders' Responses %	Teachers' Responses %
CHANGE	39.8	23.5
• Procedural/Accountability Issues	5.8	5.1
• Resourcing	3.9	7.1
• Educational	21.4	8.2
• Teachers & children	8.7	3.1
PARENTS	6.8	7.1
• Expectations	1.9	6.6
• Utilisation	4.9	0.5
KNOWLEDGE	15.5	20.4
• Leaders	2.9	11.2
• Teachers	2.9	3.6
• General awareness	9.7	3.6
RELATIONSHIPS	8.7	17.3
• Teachers	5.8	10.2
• Children	1.9	3.6
• Parents	1.0	3.6
ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES	29.1	31.6
• Time	10.7	12.2
• Equity	2.9	7.7
• School requirements	10.7	5.6
• Departmental requirements	4.8	6.1

Table 30. Teachers' and leaders' responses concerning the key challenges for K-2 leaders

The most substantial difference between teachers' and leaders' responses, noted within the five categories, lay within the category of Change, with 23.5% of teachers referring to this compared with 39.8% of leaders. The main aspect of difference lay within the educational issues, with 21.4% of leaders naming this as an important aspect, compared with only 8.2% of teachers. The other category displaying major differences in opinions between responding teachers and leaders

was Relationships. Teachers named all aspects of this category with greater frequency than leaders, with the difference most apparent for relationships concerning teachers.

Responding teachers and leaders referred to the various sub-categories with comparable frequency; however, they perceived the challenges in differing ways. In relation to the Parents' sub-category of Relationships, responding teachers felt that the expectations of parents were important, whereas leaders indicated that the utilisation of parents within the school community was a more important consideration. In the Knowledge category, teachers were concerned about issues related to the leaders' knowledge, whilst leaders were more concerned with raising the general awareness of early childhood education issues in the school and community. This trend of differing opinions was also apparent in the Organisational Issues category, with responding teachers showing greater concern for equity related matters, whilst leaders highlighted school requirements as challenges for K-2 leaders.

In summary, although there were similarities in the frequencies with which responding teachers and leaders named three of the five categories, there were some notable differences in the emphasis placed on issues within the categories. Differing views were highly apparent in relation to the Change and Relationships categories, with leaders focussed upon educational issues in change, and teachers more concerned about aspects of relationships involving teachers and leaders.

Comparison of Responses to Whether a Lack of Early Childhood Training Limits the Effectiveness of K-2 Leaders

Responses from teachers and leaders were analysed and both groups' responses are presented in Table 31.

Responses to Lack of K-2 Training on Leadership Effectiveness	Teachers' Responses %	Leaders' Responses %
YES responses:	60	50
• Specific K-2 knowledge	40	40
• Classroom experience	16	0
• Leader's credibility	4	10
NO responses:	40	50
• Ongoing learning	10	14
• Shared leadership	5	8
• Basic knowledge	6	8
• Generic leadership skills	19	20

Table 31. Teachers' and leaders' responses to whether a lack of early childhood training limits the effectiveness of K-2 leaders

With respect to the "Yes" category, 60% of teachers' responses presented an affirmative view, whilst 50% of leaders' responses did likewise. The reasons provided by teachers and leaders for their positive responses were similar in nature regarding content, except for one aspect, which concerned the importance that responding teachers placed upon leaders having K-2 classroom teaching experience. In the leaders' responses, specific knowledge of K-2 education was generally related to technical issues, with no leader suggesting that specific classroom teaching experience was essential for K-2 leaders. Of responding leaders 10% perceived that their credibility in leadership may be questioned if they lacked specific training in early childhood education, whilst 4% of teachers' responses referred to this matter.

In respect to the "No" responses, 40% of teachers' responses were in a negative mode, compared with 50% of leaders' responses. The four key reasons cited by respondents were similar in content for both groups. One of these, related to the generic nature of leadership skills, was similar in frequency of responses from both

leaders and teachers. However, leaders referred more often to ongoing learning (14%) compared to teachers (10%) as a reason for not requiring specific training. Leaders (8% of responses) also referred more often to shared leadership than teachers (5% of responses). The reason for not requiring specific training in early childhood education, related to basic knowledge of child development, was seen as having similar importance equal importance by both responding leaders and teachers.

In summary, responding teachers perceived that specific training in early childhood education was important for K-2 leaders, although leaders were equally divided on the issue.

Comparison of Teachers' and Principals' Perceptions of the Principal's Leadership Strengths

For the purpose of accurately comparing the responses to this question, only the principals' and teachers' perceptions were used. Responses from the teachers' and principals' surveys, regarding the principal's strengths in K-2 education, were compared utilising the four categories of Vision and Team Building, School and Community Relationships, Instructional Issues, and High Performance. The frequencies, expressed as percentages for the principals' and teachers' responses, are shown in Table 32.

The two categories of strengths which attracted the highest percentage of responses from teachers and principals were Vision and Team Building, and School and Community Relationships. However, there were differences between how responding teachers and principals perceived the strengths of the principals, with 22.1% of teachers' referring to the category of Vision and Team Building and 38.3% of principals' naming the same category. The reverse occurred within the School

and Community Relationship category, which attracted 54.6% of responses from teachers, compared with 33.0% of responses from principals.

A major difference between responding teachers' and leaders' perceptions, within the first category, Vision and Team Building, related to the aspect of the principal's energy in the leadership role, with 1.9% of teachers' responses referring to energy as a strength of their principal. Meanwhile, the principals perceived their strength in this area to be higher, being referred to in 9.6% of their responses. In the second category, School and Community Relationships, the major difference between responding teachers and leaders was in relation to the aspect of interpersonal skills, attracting 17.7% of teachers' responses compared to 8.5% of principals' responses.

Minor differences in perceptions, regarding the principal's strengths in leadership, were apparent between the principals' and teachers' views, in aspects such as shared leadership (2.5% of teachers and 6.4% of principals), innovation (0.6% of teachers and 4.3% of principals), and conflict skills (4.7% of teachers and 1.1% of principals). In two of these aspects, principals' perceptions of their strengths were greater than teachers' perceptions.

In the other two categories, Instructional Issues and High Performance, responding teachers' and principals' perceptions were similar, although some minor differences were apparent in the aspects of knowledge (4.4% of teachers and 7.4% of principals) and innovation (0.6% of teachers and 4.3% of principals).

Perceived Strengths of Principals in K-2 Leadership	Principals' Responses %	Teachers' Responses %
VISION AND TEAM BUILDING	38.3	22.1
• Energy	9.6	1.9
• Presence	2.1	3.5
• Shared leadership	6.4	2.5
• Equity	5.3	3.1
• Risk taking	2.1	2.2
• Evaluation	5.3	3.5
• Collaboration	3.2	1.6
• Team building	4.3	3.8
SCHOOL & COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS	33.0	54.6
• Parents	4.3	4.1
• Pastoral care	3.2	2.5
• Trust	2.1	4.4
• Conflict skills	1.1	4.7
• Interpersonal skills	8.5	17.7
• Accessibility	0	5.1
• Consultation	0	1.9
• Interest	2.1	5.4
• Support	11.7	8.8
INSTRUCTIONAL ISSUES	13.8	9.7
• Assistance	0	0.6
• Professional Development	1.0	3.5
• Knowledge	7.4	4.4
• Feedback	0	0.6
• Innovation	4.3	0.6
• Initiative	1.0	0
PERFORMANCE RELATED	14.9	13.6
• Recognition	3.2	5.7
• Resources	3.2	0.6
• High Performance	3.2	1.3
• Empowerment	3.2	0
• Organisational Skills	1.0	4.4
• Administrative Skills	1.0	1.6

Table 32. Teachers' and principals' perceptions of the principal's leadership strengths

In summary, teachers' and principals' perceptions of the leadership strengths of the principal were similar, although major differences were apparent in the 'degrees' of perception expressed, particularly with respect to the principals' leadership energy and interpersonal skills.

Comparison of Teachers' And Principals' Perceptions of the Principal's Leadership Weaknesses

For the purpose of accurately comparing the responses to this question, only the principals' and teachers' perceptions were used. As with the question related to the Principal's leadership strengths, this question was coded into the four categories of Vision and Team Building, School and Community Relationships, Instructional Issues, and Performance Related. The frequencies of the teachers' and principals' responses are presented in Table 33.

Responses from two of the categories, School and Community Relationships and Performance Related, exhibited a difference between responding teachers' and principal' views. Teachers' responses indicated that they perceived this category of leadership to be an important area of weakness in the principals' skills, with 51.8% of responses referring to related aspects. At 21.4%, principals' responses indicated a perception of lesser importance for this category, with a response rate which was 30.4% lower than the responding teachers in this area. On the other hand, principals' responses indicated that their perceived leadership weaknesses lay more in the category of Performance Related issues, with 42.9% of leaders referring to this aspect. By comparison, only 8.4% of teachers' responses referred to this weakness.

Perceived Weaknesses of Principals in K-2 Leadership	Principals' Responses %	Teachers' Responses %
VISION AND TEAM BUILDING	16.7	22.0
• Presence	2.4	9.5
• Shared leadership	2.4	1.8
• Equity	0	5.9
• Risk taking	4.8	1.2
• Evaluation	7.1	1.2
• Collaboration	0	1.2
• Team building	0	1.2
SCHOOL & COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS	21.4	51.8
• Parents	2.4	2.4
• Pastoral care	7.1	1.8
• Trust	0	0.6
• Reliability	4.8	0.6
• Conflict skills	7.1	8.4
• Interpersonal skills	0	18.4
• Accessibility	0	10.1
• Interest	0	3.0
• Support	0	6.5
INSTRUCTIONAL ISSUES	19.0	17.9
• Assistance	0	1.8
• Professional development	0	1.8
• Knowledge	9.5	10.1
• Feedback	9.5	1.8
• Innovation	0	2.4
PERFORMANCE RELATED	42.9	8.4
• Recognition	4.8	4.2
• Resources	2.4	0.6
• High performance	4.8	0.6
• Organisational skills	21.4	1.8
• Administrative skills	9.5	1.2

Table 33. Teachers' and principals' perceptions of principals' leadership weaknesses

There were few similarities between the responding teachers' and principals' perceptions of the principal's leadership weaknesses within the items in the various categories. In the School and Community Relationships category, no principal referred to leadership weaknesses in accessibility; however, 18.4% of teachers'

responses referred to this as a significant area of weakness in their principal's leadership. In the same manner, principals failed to mention leadership weaknesses in consultation, but 10.1% of teachers' responses named this as a weakness. The other major difference between principals' and teachers' views lay in the Performance Related category, where 21.4% of principals' responses referred to leadership weaknesses in organisational skills, although only 1.8% of responses from teachers named this issue as a weakness in their principal's leadership.

Other, more minor, differences were apparent between principals' and teachers' views on leadership weaknesses. These were in administrative skills (1.2% of teachers' responses and 9.5% of principals' responses), feedback (1.8% of teachers' responses and 9.5% of principals' responses), presence (9.5% of teachers' responses and 2.4% of principals' responses), and support (6.5% of teachers' responses and no responses from principals).

In summary, responding principals perceived their major leadership weakness to be in the area of organisational skills, whilst teachers perceived that their present principal demonstrated weaknesses in consultation, accessibility, and presence.

Comparison of Teachers' and Principals' Responses Identifying Primary Leadership Tasks Undertaken in K-2 Education

For the purpose of accurately comparing the responses to this question, only the principals' and teachers' perceptions were used. The tasks listed by respondents were coded into seven categories: Program Management, Personnel Management, Management of Professional Development, Presence, School Policy/Curriculum Management, General Operational Management, and Other.

Perceptions of Primary Leadership Tasks Undertaken by Principals	Teachers' Responses %	Principals' Responses %
PROGRAM MANAGEMENT	11.7	1.2
• Flying Start	7.4	1.2
• Special needs	1.1	- 0
• Other	3.2	0
PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT	19.7	32.6
• Teacher related	8.5	22.1
• Student related	8.0	9.3
• Parent related	3.2	1.2
MANAGEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	10.6	15.1
• Organising	6.4	9.3
• Leading	1.6	1.2
• Assessing needs	2.6	4.6
PRESENCE	13.8	7.0
• At school	12.2	3.5
• In community	1.6	3.5
SCHOOL POLICY/CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT	10.1	14.0
• Development	1.1	3.5
• Implementation	1.1	2.5
• Evaluation	1.6	5.8
• Other	6.3	1.2
GENERAL OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT	25.0	30.2
• Documentation	0.5	1.2
• Resourcing – Personnel & Physical	2.1	8.1
• Delegation of Tasks	6.9	8.1
• Day to Day Operation	15.4	12.8
OTHER	9.1	0
• Unknown	2.7	0
• None	6.4	0

Table 34. Teachers' and principals' perceptions of the primary leadership tasks undertaken by the principal, in relation to K-2 education.

The frequencies with which primary tasks were named, by each responding group, are presented in Table 34.

Differences were evident between responding principals' and teachers' views, on leadership tasks undertaken by the principal, in three of the categories of responses. These were Personnel Management (19.7% of teachers' responses and 32.6% of principals' responses), Program Management (11.7% of teachers' responses and 1.2% of principals' responses) and Other (9.1% of teachers' responses and no principals' responses).

Within these categories, there were some noticeable differences between the two groups of respondents, within certain items. In the Personnel Management category, 8.5% of teachers' responses referred to teacher-based leadership tasks, whilst 22.1% of principals' responses indicated this as a primary leadership task. In the category of Presence, 12.2% of teachers' responses referred to the perception that one of the primary tasks for their principal was related to working with, and relating to, others, as well as visiting classrooms at their school. On the other hand, only 3.5% of principals' responses referred to these matters as primary leadership tasks.

A final observation, highlighted by this comparative analysis, relates to the fact that 9.1% of teachers' responses indicated that they believed that their principal either had no leadership tasks in K-2 education, or that they did not know what these tasks were.

In summary, differences were apparent between teachers' and principals' perceptions of the primary leadership tasks undertaken by principals in relation to K-2 education. These differences lay in teacher-related personnel matters, leadership

presence in the K-2 area of the school, and the fact that a number of teachers indicated that their principal either carried out no leadership tasks in K-2, or that these tasks were unknown.

Statistical Analysis of Leaders' and Teachers' Data

Further analyses were undertaken to establish whether there were statistically significant differences between responses from the two groups involved in the study, K-2 teachers' and their leaders.

Leaders' Responses to Survey Scaled Items

Factor analysis of leaders' responses, grouped into the four content categories, indicated that 45 of the 56 statements correlated into fourteen discreet factors. These are presented in Table 35, which also shows the number of statements which correlated into each factor.

Category	Factor Name	No. of Statements
Vision and Team Building	Empowerment	3
	Energy	3
	Collaboration	2
	Team Building	2

Category	Factor Name	No. of Statements
School and Community Relationships	Interpersonal Relationships	4
	Interpersonal Skills	3
	Reliability	2
	Consultation	2
	Respect	2
	Communication	4
Instructional Issues	Leaders' Knowledge	4
	Teachers' Knowledge	7
Performance Related	Recognition	4
	High Performance	3

Table 35. Results of factor analysis of leaders' responses to 56 scaled statements

Comparative analysis of responses in each of the fourteen factors, derived from the leaders responses to the 56 items in their survey, were carried out with respect to the leaders' gender, school type, limitations due to lack of early childhood training, position classification, training specialisation, and qualifications. Table 36 shows the average scores and p values for responses. Within all tables in this section, all significant values are presented in bold type.

Results indicate that there is a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) between male and female leaders' responses on the factors of Energy, Relationships, and Leaders' Knowledge. Female leaders believed that their leadership role was

significantly more energetic in nature, they had better relationships, and possessed greater knowledge of K-2 education, than their male counterparts.

Leadership Factor	Gender			School Type			Effect of Lack of Early Childhood Training		
	Male	Female	*p* value	Primary	District High	*p* value	Yes	No	*p* value
Empowerment	1.65	1.63	.918	1.61	1.75	.478	1.67	1.61	.700
Energy	1.71	1.26	**.008**	1.47	1.38	.655	1.30	1.61	**.057**
Collaboration	1.35	1.19	.214	1.22	1.44	.161	1.26	1.26	.992
Team Building	1.35	1.20	.233	1.22	1.44	.178	1.21	1.32	.439
Relationships	1.65	1.33	**.011**	1.45	1.53	.596	1.40	1.53	.347
Interpersonal	1.41	1.42	.469	1.27	1.71	**.004**	1.32	1.40	.499
Reliability	1.47	1.46	.914	1.44	1.56	.435	1.43	1.50	.578
Communication	2.22	2.35	.460	2.31	2.21	.638	2.43	2.14	.099
Consultation	1.41	1.28	.297	1.34	1.31	.839	1.29	1.39	.374
Respect	1.35	1.37	.246	1.33	1.88	**.001**	1.41	1.47	.616
Leaders' Knowledge	2.32	2.15	**.000**	1.73	1.63	.725	1.50	1.93	**.055**
Teachers' Knowledge	1.64	1.56	.554	1.56	1.73	.293	1.59	1.60.	.902
Recognition	1.61	1.46	.345	1.53	1.50	.869	1.46	1.50	.368
High Performance	1.75	1.57	.221	1.57	1.92	.207	1.57	1.71	.311

Table 36. Mean scores and *p* values for leaders' responses to scaled items in relation to gender, school type and effect of lack of early childhood training

Significant differences were highlighted between responses from leaders of primary and district high schools with regard to the factors of Interpersonal Skills and Respect. Primary school leaders perceived that their leadership depended more upon interpersonal skills and possession of respect than did leaders from district high schools.

Although none of the fourteen factors returned differences which met the definition of statistical significance, with respect to those who answered 'Yes' and 'No' to the question of the effect of lack of early childhood training, two items were marginally outside the defined limit, Leaders' Knowledge, and Energy. Leaders who responded "Yes" to the question believed that their leadership depended more heavily upon both these factors than leaders who responded "No".

Leadership Factor	Position Classification					Training Specialisation				
	AST 2	AST 3	AP	Prin	*p* value	ECE	Prim	Sec	PE	*p* value
Empowerment	1.63	2.00	1.57	1.63	.764	1.70	1.56	1.50	1.88	.611
Energy	1.53	1.67	1.10	1.56	.173	1.13	1.69	1.67	1.42	**.015**
Collaboration	1.38	1.00	1.21	1.24	.574	1.23	1.19	1.33	1.63	.251
Team Building	1.46	1.25	1.14	1.18	.259	1.20	1.31	1.17	1.38	.809
Relationships	1.42	1.50	1.32	1.54	.647	1.33	1.60	1.33	1.44	.280
Interpersonal	1.36	1.33	1.19	1.42	.642	1.33	1.39	1.33	1.33	.980
Reliability	1.46	1.75	1.36	1.47	.688	1.47	1.50	1.50	1.25	.738
Communication	2.36	1.83	2.33	2.28	.677	2.40	2.20	2.33	2.25	.795
Consultation	1.29	1.75	1.14	1.39	.192	1.30	1.28	1.50	1.63	.345
Respect	1.54	1.75	1.29	1.39	.426	1.37	1.44	1.50	1.63	.754
Leaders' Knowledge	1.44	2.00	1.29	2.00	**.048**	1.12	2.10	2.08	1.88	**.000**
Recognition	1.47	1.83	1.52	1.52	.812	1.44	1.63	1.33	1.50	.623
High Performance	1.72	1.67	1.52	1.63	.486	1.47	1.70	1.78	1.91	.237

Table 37. Mean scores and *p* values for leaders' responses to scaled items in relation to classification and specialisation

Results indicate that, in relation to leaders' position classification, there is a significant difference in responses on the factor of Leaders' Knowledge. Multiple comparisons were carried out between the various classification levels, to establish which specific differences were statistically significant in relation to the Leaders' Knowledge factor. Results of these comparisons are presented in Table 38.

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable 1	Independent Variable 2	Mean Difference	*p* value
Leaders' Knowledge	AST 2	AST 3	0.563	.2.79
	AST 2	Assistant Principal	0.152	.637
	AST 2	Principal	0.563	**.029**
	AST 3	Assistant Principal	0.714	.192
	AST 3	Principal	0.000	.000
	Assistant Principal	Principal	0.714	**.021**

Table 38. Results of multiple comparison concerning leaders' classification

The results of this comparative analysis indicate that both AST 2 and AP respondents believed that leaders' knowledge was of greater importance, statistically, than did responding principals.

Table 39 shows the results of the multiple comparison analysis undertaken to establish any significant differences between responses from leaders with different training specialisations, with respect to the factors of Energy and Leaders' Knowledge.

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable 1	Independent Variable 2	Mean Difference	*p* value
Leaders' Knowledge	Early Childhood	Primary	0.981	**.000**
	Early Childhood	Secondary	0.967	**.011**
	Early Childhood	Physical Education	0.758	**.023**
	Primary	Secondary	0.014	.969
	Primary	Physical Education	0.222	.483
	Secondary	Physical Education	0.208	.834
Energy	Early Childhood	Primary	0.552	**.002**
	Early Childhood	Secondary	0.533	.081
	Early Childhood	Physical Education	0.283	.290
	Primary	Secondary	0.019	.950
	Primary	Physical Education	0.269	.307
	Secondary	Physical Education	0.250	.490

Table 39. Results of multiple comparison concerning leaders' training specialisation

These results show that, statistically, leaders with early childhood specialisation place more importance upon leaders' knowledge in their leadership role than those with primary, secondary, and physical education training. With respect to the factor of Energy, early childhood-trained leaders believed that energy played a greater part in their leadership than their counterparts who had primary training.

Table 40 shows the mean scores and *p* values for responses, based upon groupings according to leaders' qualifications. Analysis of differences between these groups of responses returned no statistically significant results.

Leadership Factor	Qualifications				
	M Ed	B Ed + TTC + Other	B Ed	TTC + Other	*p* value
Empowerment	1.52	1.42	1.42	1.65	.604
Energy	2.12	2.08	2.42	2.25	.252
Collaboration	1.18	1.06	1.38	1.31	.341
Team Building	1.31	1.25	1.23	1.13	.869
Relationships	1.53	1.50	1.36	1.19	.371
Interpersonal	1.31	1.54	1.27	1.33	.504
Reliability	1.47	1.44	1.36	1.75	.451
Communication	1.88	2.08	2.17	2.00	.588
Consultation	2.18	2.44	2.25	2.25	.449
Respect	1.38	1.44	1.23	1.50	.943
Leaders' Knowledge	2.52	2.72	2.62	2.56	.672
Teachers' Knowledge	1.71	1.48	1.48	1.50	.943
Recognition	1.48	1.46	1.58	1.50	.946
High Performance	1.73	1.54	1.58	1.50	.678

Table 40. Mean scores and *p* values for leaders' responses to scaled items comparing teaching qualifications

Teachers' Responses to Survey Scaled Items

Factor analysis of the teachers' responses, within four basic categories, indicated that 50 of the 56 statements correlated into seven discreet factors. These results are

shown in Table 41, which also shows the number of statements that correlated into each factor.

Category	Factor Name	No. of Statements
Vision and Team Building	Collaborative Leadership	10
School and Community Relationships	Interpersonal Skills	10
	Accessibility	3
	Support	2
Instructional Issues	Professional Development	8
	Knowledge	6
Performance Related	Performance	9

Table 41. Results of factor analysis of teachers' responses to 56 scaled statements

Comparative analyses of responses, in each of these seven factors, were carried out in relation to teachers' level of qualifications, school type, limitations due to lack of early childhood training, and training specialisation. Teachers' gender was not considered in factor analysis, as there was only one male responding teacher compared to one hundred female respondents.

Table 42 shows the mean scores and *p* values for responses, based upon teachers' level of qualifications, in relation to the seven factors.

Leadership Factor	Level of Qualifications						
	2 Degrees	B Ed + TTC	B Ed	Other + TTC	Other Degree	TTC	*p* value
Collaboration	1.97	2.19	1.83	1.70	1.48	1.61	**.001**
Interpersonal	1.96	1.86	1.55	1.44	1.47	1.36	**.003**
Accessibility	2.05	2.11	1.62	1.77	1.56	1.44	**.004**
Support	2.00	2.25	1.93	1.60	1.83	1.81	**.047**
Professional Development	2.04	2.18	1.84	1.70	1.57	1.62	**.009**
Teachers' Knowledge	1.81	1.99	1.67	1.52	1.59	1.44	.058
Performance	2.10	1.09	1.76	1.58	1.69	1.58	**.010**

Table 42. Mean scores and *p* values for teachers' responses to scaled items comparing level of qualifications

Results indicate that there are statistically significant differences between teachers' responses on factors of Collaboration, Interpersonal, Accessibility, Support, Professional Development, and Performance, when responses from groups with the various levels of qualifications are compared. Furthermore, the Teachers' Knowledge factor shows a difference ($p = .058$) marginally outside the specification for significance for the study.

Multiple comparisons were carried out in respect to the teachers' level of qualifications in order to identify specific areas of difference. Results are presented in Table 43.

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable 1	Independent Variable 2	Mean Difference	*p* value
Collaboration	2 Degrees	B Ed + TTC	0.221	.952
	2 Degrees	B Ed	0.146	.993
	2 Degrees	Other Degree + TTC	0.271	.941
	2 Degrees	Other Degree	0.494	.571
	2 Degrees	TTC	0.365	.757
	B Ed + TTC	B Ed	0.367	.200
	B Ed + TTC	Other Degree + TTC	0.493	.216
	B Ed + TTC	Other Degree	0.715	**.021**
	B Ed + TTC	TTC	0.587	**.020**
	B Ed	Other Degree + TTC	0.126	.993
	B Ed	Other Degree	0.348	.654
	B Ed	TTC	0.220	.854
	Other Degree + TTC	Other Degree	0.222	.966
	Other Degree + TTC	TTC	0.094	.999
	Other Degree	TTC	0.128	.996
Interpersonal	2 Degrees	B Ed + TTC	0.107	.997
	2 Degrees	B Ed	0.415	.467
	2 Degrees	Other Degree + TTC	0.523	.371
	2 Degrees	Other Degree	0.492	.469
	2 Degrees	TTC	0.600	.143
	B Ed + TTC	B Ed	0.308	.287
	B Ed + TTC	Other Degree + TTC	0.416	.300
	B Ed + TTC	Other Degree	0.385	.436
	B Ed + TTC	TTC	0.493	**.043**
	B Ed	Other Degree + TTC	0.108	.995
	B Ed	Other Degree	0.077	.999
	B Ed	TTC	0.185	.892
	Other Degree + TTC	Other Degree	0.031	1.000
	Other Degree + TTC	TTC	0.077	.999
	Other Degree	TTC	0.108	.997
Accessibility	2 Degrees	B Ed + TTC	0.059	1.000
	2 Degrees	B Ed	0.430	.711
	2 Degrees	Other Degree + TTC	0.218	.968
	2 Degrees	Other Degree	0.492	.744
	2 Degrees	TTC	0.610	.404
	B Ed + TTC	B Ed	0.490	.106
	B Ed + TTC	Other Degree + TTC	0.341	.786
	B Ed + TTC	Other Degree	0.552	.326
	B Ed + TTC	TTC	0.670	**.030**
	B Ed	Other Degree + TTC	0.149	.993
	B Ed	Other Degree	0.062	1.000
	B Ed	TTC	0.180	.968
	Other Degree + TTC	Other Degree	0.211	.988
	Other Degree + TTC	TTC	0.329	.862
	Other Degree	TTC	0.118	.999

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable 1	Independent Variable 2	Mean Difference	*p* Value
Support	2 Degrees	B Ed + TTC	0.250	.963
	2 Degrees	B Ed	0.074	1.000
	2 Degrees	Other Degree + TTC	0.400	.868
	2 Degrees	Other Degree	0.167	.997
	2 Degrees	TTC	0.188	.993
	B Ed + TTC	B Ed	0.324	.546
	B Ed + TTC	Other Degree + TTC	0.650	.132
	B Ed + TTC	Other Degree	0.417	.652
	B Ed + TTC	TTC	0.438	.370
	B Ed	Other Degree + TTC	0.325	.823
	B Ed	Other Degree	0.093	.999
	B Ed	TTC	0.113	.996
	Other Degree + TTC	Other Degree	0.233	.981
	Other Degree + TTC	TTC	0.213	.978
	Other Degree	TTC	0.021	1.000
Professional Development	2 Degrees	B Ed + TTC	0.143	.996
	2 Degrees	B Ed	0.198	.981
	2 Degrees	Other Degree + TTC	0.336	.906
	2 Degrees	Other Degree	0.466	.722
	2 Degrees	TTC	0.411	.739
	B Ed + TTC	B Ed	0.341	.385
	B Ed + TTC	Other Degree + TTC	0.479	.352
	B Ed + TTC	Other Degree	0.609	.146
	B Ed + TTC	TTC	0.554	.075
	B Ed	Other Degree + TTC	0.138	.993
	B Ed	Other Degree	0.269	.897
	B Ed	TTC	0.213	.909
	Other Degree + TTC	Other Degree	0.131	.998
	Other Degree + TTC	TTC	0.075	1.000
	Other Degree	TTC	0.056	1.000
Performance	2 Degrees	B Ed + TTC	0.004	1.000
	2 Degrees	B Ed	0.330	.813
	2 Degrees	Other Degree + TTC	0.517	.539
	2 Degrees	Other Degree	0.404	.793
	2 Degrees	TTC	0.519	.438
	B Ed + TTC	B Ed	0.326	.375
	B Ed + TTC	Other Degree + TTC	0.514	.217
	B Ed + TTC	Other Degree	0.400	.546
	B Ed + TTC	TTC	0.515	.085
	B Ed	Other Degree + TTC	0.188	.965
	B Ed	Other Degree	0.074	1.000
	B Ed	TTC	0.189	.930
	Other Degree + TTC	Other Degree	0.114	.999
	Other Degree + TTC	TTC	0.001	1.000
	Other Degree	TTC	0.115	.998

Table 43. Results of multiple comparison regarding teachers' levels of qualifications

These multiple comparisons indicate that respondents with an Other Degree or TTC qualification believe that their leader practises collaboration in leadership more than do respondents with a B Ed and TTC qualification. Respondents with a TTC qualification also perceived that their leaders were more accessible and possessed better interpersonal skills than respondents with a B Ed and TTC qualification.

Analysis of teachers' school type, limitations due to lack of early childhood training, and training specialisation was undertaken and Table 44 presents the mean scores and *p* values for teachers' responses.

Leadership Factor	School Type			Effect of Lack of Early Childhood Training			Teachers' Specialisation		
	District High	Primary	*p* value	Yes	No	*p* value	ECE	Primary	*p* value
Collaboration	1.62	1.89	.113	1.90	1.81	.450	1.89	1.84	.732
Interpersonal	1.64	1.50	.376	1.64	1.61	.751	1.82	1.65	.811
Accessibility	1.84	1.27	**.000**	1.86	1.66	.124	1.81	1.68	.450
Support	1.99	1.73	.176	1.96	1.96	1.000	1.97	1.94	.889
Professional Development	1.60	1.92	.089	1.92	1.83	.469	1.89	1.95	.881
Teachers' Knowledge	1.73	1.59	.486	1.79	1.62	.171	1.75	1.68	.269
Performance	1.63	1.85	.193	1.86	1.78	.528	1.82	1.91	.527

Table 44. Mean scores and *p* values for teachers' responses to scaled items comparing demographic factors

Results indicate that there is a statistically significant difference between teachers' responses in relation to the Access factor, with teachers in primary schools indicating

that they had significantly more opportunities to access their most contacted staff member, than respondents in district high schools. With respect to those teachers who answered "Yes" and No" to the question regarding the effect of lack of early childhood training, no statistically significant differences were shown. Teachers' areas of specialisation also returned no significant differences in relation to the seven factors.

Comparative analysis was undertaken, in each of the seven factors, regarding the teachers' principal's gender and training specialisation. Table 45 shows the mean scores and *p* values for responses.

Leadership Factor	Principal's Gender			Principal's Specialisation			
	Male	Female	*p* value	ECE	Prim	Sec	*p* value
Collaboration	1.87	1.83	.784	1.74	2.06	1.56	**.002**
Interpersonal	1.62	1.62	.998	1.65	1.83	1.43	**.001**
Accessibility	1.78	1.75	.832	2.89	2.69	2.77	.405
Support	1.96	1.98	.921	1.72	2.01	1.65	**.045**
Professional Development	1.90	1.80	.483	1.72	2.04	1.48	**.000**
Teachers' Knowledge	1.69	1.79	.511	2.63	2.54	2.33	**.030**
Performance	1.82	1.86	.790	1.65	1.98	1.39	**.000**

Table 45. Mean scores and *p* values for teachers' responses to scaled items comparing principals' gender and specialisation

Results indicate that there is no statistically significant difference on any of the factors when principals' gender is considered. In the factors of Collaboration, Interpersonal Skills, Support, Professional Development, Teachers' Knowledge, and

Performance, significant difference was indicated in relation to principals' specialisations. Multiple comparisons were performed in order to identify specific areas of significant difference. Results of these comparisons are presented in Table 46.

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable 1	Independent Variable 2	Mean Difference	*p* value
Collaboration	Early Childhood	Primary	0.316	.258
	Early Childhood	Secondary	0.213	.344
	Primary	Secondary	0.495	**.002**
Interpersonal	Early Childhood	Primary	0.183	.419
	Early Childhood	Secondary	0.213	.344
	Primary	Secondary	0.396	**.001**
Accessibility	Early Childhood	Primary	0.194	.427
	Early Childhood	Secondary	0.121	.739
	Primary	Secondary	0.073	.790
Support	Early Childhood	Primary	0.292	.373
	Early Childhood	Secondary	0.070	.949
	Primary	Secondary	0.362	.058
Professional Development	Early Childhood	Primary	0.317	.233
	Early Childhood	Secondary	0.239	.471
	Primary	Secondary	0.556	**.000**
Teachers' Knowledge	Early Childhood	Primary	0.087	.799
	Early Childhood	Secondary	0.306	.090
	Primary	Secondary	0.217	.073
Performance	Early Childhood	Primary	0.326	.147
	Early Childhood	Secondary	0.268	.301
	Primary	Secondary	0.591	**.000**

Table 46. Results of multiple comparisons regarding principals' specialisation

Primary-trained principals were perceived to be more collaborative, possess better interpersonal skills, be more supportive, provide more encouragement for high performance, and have greater expertise in professional development than those principals with a secondary specialisation.

Comparative analysis regarding teachers' most contacted staff member for leadership matters in K-2, was undertaken and the results are presented in Table 47.

Leadership Factor	Teachers' Most Contacted Staff Member's Level of Responsibility					
	AST 1	AST 2	AST 3	AP	Classroom Teacher	*p* value
Collaboration	1.99	2.02	1.86	1.82	1.94	**.031**
Interpersonal	1.61	1.74	1.80	1.41	1.89	**.042**
Accessibility	2.78	1.87	1.81	1.49	1.92	**.003**
Support	1.83	2.03	2.07	1.87	2.00	.807
Professional Development	2.17	2.03	1.98	1.58	2.00	**.009**
Teachers' Knowledge	2.17	1.84	1.81	1.45	1.81	**.043**
Performance	1.85	1.94	2.03	1.62	1.81	.131

Table 47. Mean scores and *p* values for teachers' responses to scaled items considering their most contacted staff member's level of responsibility

Statistical differences were indicated between responses from groups of teachers who reported contacting staff members at the various levels of responsibility, related to the factors of Collaboration, Interpersonal Skills, Accessibility, Professional Development, and Teachers' Knowledge.

Multiple comparisons were carried out to establish which specific pairs of levels of responsibility exhibited statistically significant difference. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 48.

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable 1	Independent Variable 2	Mean Difference	*p* value
Collaboration	AST 1	AST 2	0.05	1.000
	AST 1	AST 3	0.11	.999
	AST 1	Assistant Principal	0.35	.875
	AST 1	Classroom Teacher	0.02	1.000
	AST 2	AST 3	0.16	.985
	AST 2	Assistant Principal	0.40	**.038**
	AST 2	Classroom Teacher	0.07	.997
	AST 3	Assistant Principal	0.24	.879
	AST 3	Classroom Teacher	0.09	.999
	Assistant Principal	Classroom Teacher	0.32	.609
Interpersonal	AST 1	AST 2	0.12	.995
	AST 1	AST 3	0.19	.988
	AST 1	Assistant Principal	0.21	.971
	AST 1	Classroom Teacher	0.08	.999
	AST 2	AST 3	0.08	.999
	AST 2	Assistant Principal	0.33	.088
	AST 2	Classroom Teacher	0.04	1.000
	AST 3	Assistant Principal	0.39	.418
	AST 3	Classroom Teacher	0.10	.996
	Assistant Principal	Classroom Teacher	0.29	.625
Accessibility	AST 1	AST 2	0.91	.166
	AST 1	AST 3	0.99	.238
	AST 1	Assistant Principal	1.28	**.016**
	AST 1	Classroom Teacher	0.65	.331
	AST 2	AST 3	0.06	1.000
	AST 2	Assistant Principal	0.38	.124
	AST 2	Classroom Teacher	0.06	.999
	AST 3	Assistant Principal	0.32	.805
	AST 3	Classroom Teacher	0.12	.997
	Assistant Principal	Classroom Teacher	0.43	.452
Support	AST 1	AST 2	0.20	.990
	AST 1	AST 3	0.24	.989
	AST 1	Assistant Principal	0.04	1.000
	AST 1	Classroom Teacher	0.17	.997
	AST 2	AST 3	0.04	1.000
	AST 2	Assistant Principal	0.16	.868
	AST 2	Classroom Teacher	0.03	1.000
	AST 3	Assistant Principal	0.20	.963
	AST 3	Classroom Teacher	0.07	1.000
	Assistant Principal	Classroom Teacher	0.13	.990

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable 1	Independent Variable 2	Mean Difference	*p* value
Professional Development	AST 1	AST 2	0.14	.996
	AST 1	AST 3	0.18	.993
	AST 1	Assistant Principal	0.59	.538
	AST 1	Classroom Teacher	0.17	.995
	AST 2	AST 3	0.05	1.000
	AST 2	Assistant Principal	0.45	**.018**
	AST 2	Classroom Teacher	0.03	1.000
	AST 3	Assistant Principal	0.41	.645
	AST 3	Classroom Teacher	0.02	1.000
	Assistant Principal	Classroom Teacher	0.42	.396
Teachers' Knowledge	AST 1	AST 2	0.33	.934
	AST 1	AST 3	0.36	.946
	AST 1	Assistant Principal	0.72	.423
	AST 1	Classroom Teacher	0.35	.942
	AST 2	AST 3	0.03	1.000
	AST 2	Assistant Principal	0.39	.103
	AST 2	Classroom Teacher	0.02	1.000
	AST 3	Assistant Principal	0.38	.721
	AST 3	Classroom Teacher	0.05	1.000
	Assistant Principal	Classroom Teacher	0.37	.625
Performance	AST 1	AST 2	0.08	.999
	AST 1	AST 3	0.18	.994
	AST 1	Assistant Principal	0.23	.974
	AST 1	Classroom Teacher	0.04	1.000
	AST 2	AST 3	0.10	.996
	AST 2	Assistant Principal	0.31	.193
	AST 2	Classroom Teacher	0.12	.963
	AST 3	Assistant Principal	0.41	.521
	AST 3	Classroom Teacher	0.22	.959
	Assistant Principal	Classroom Teacher	0.19	.928

Table 48. Mean scores and *p* values for teachers' responses to scaled items, considering level of responsibility of their most contacted staff member

Multiple comparisons highlighted the following significant differences. Contacted APs were more collaborative in their leadership than contacted AST 2s. Contacted APs were more accessible than AST 1s, and contacted APs provided more leadership in professional development than contacted AST 2s.

Although the factors of Teachers' Knowledge and Interpersonal Skills returned *p* values which met the definition of statistical significance during the initial *t* tests, multiple comparisons failed to identify any significant differences between individual groups for these factors.

Comparative analysis was undertaken on teachers' responses, in respect to the gender and training specialisation of the staff member they contact most concerning K-2 leadership matters. Table 49 shows the mean scores and *p* values for responses.

Leadership Factor	Teacher's Most Contacted Staff Member's Gender			Teacher's Most Contacted Staff Member's Specialisation		
	Female	Male	*p* value	ECE	Prim	*p* value
Collaboration	1.80	2.45	**.000**	1.88	1.67	.161
Interpersonal	1.58	1.98	**.013**	1.82	1.47	.202
Accessibility	1.72	2.20	**.023**	1.75	1.56	.271
Support	1.87	2.75	**.000**	1.83	1.89	.738
Professional Development	1.80	2.60	**.000**	1.88	1.61	**.046**
Teachers' Knowledge	1.64	2.57	**.000**	1.62	1.49	.320
Performance	1.74	2.62	**.000**	1.73	1.73	.982

Table 49. Mean scores and *p* values for teachers' responses to scaled items, considering their most contacted staff member's gender and specialisation

These results indicate that perceptions of leadership capabilities of female staff members who are most contacted are statistically different to those of most contacted male staff members. Significant differences were evident in all seven factors considered. In relation to the specialisation of teachers' most contacted staff members,

teachers perceived that those who were primary trained had greater expertise in professional development than their early childhood counterparts.

Comparison of Leaders' and Teachers' Responses to the 56 Scaled Items

Comparative analysis was undertaken to investigate whether there was any statistical significant difference in relation to how teachers and leaders responded to the 56 scaled items. Results of this analysis are presented in Table 50.

Statement	1		2		3		4		5	
	Mean Score	p value	Mean Score	p value	Mean Score	p value	Mean Score	p value	Mean Score	p value
Leader	1.58	.640	1.70	.113	1.21	.101	1.30	.311	1.30	.077
Teacher	1.64		1.91		1.48		1.44		1.61	
Statement	**6**		**7**		**8**		**9**		**10**	
	Mean Score	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**
Leader	1.55	.662	1.52	.348	1.67	.744	1.36	**.000**	1.33	.197
Teacher	1.65		1.78		1.67		2.02		1.54	
Statement	**11**		**12**		**13**		**14**		**15**	
	Mean Score	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**
Leader	1.40	.102	1.35	.109	2.68	**.002**	1.40	**.028**	1.58	**.011**
Teacher	1.62		1.66		2.22		1.82		1.90	
Statement	**16**		**17**		**18**		**19**		**20**	
	Mean Score	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**
Leader	1.38	.134	1.53	.051	2.08	.084	1.45	**.022**	1.59	.300
Teacher	1.53		1.84		2.35		1.82		1.63	
Statement	**21**		**22**		**23**		**24**		**25**	
	Mean Score	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**
Leader	1.44	**.009**	1.92	.059	1.56	**.025**	1.30	**.038**	1.18	**.000**
Teacher	1.90		2.09		1.95		1.59		1.73	
Statement	**26**		**27**		**28**		**29**		**30**	
	Mean Score	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**
Leader	1.38	**.031**	1.90	.587	1.35	**.001**	1.18	**.000**	1.78	.422
Teacher	1.77		2.03		1.45		1.82		1.81	
Statement	**31**		**32**		**33**		**34**		**35**	
	Mean Score	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**
Leader	1.64	.197	1.85	.301	1.62	.080	1.70	.868	2.05	.212
Teacher	1.88		2.10		1.74		1.77		1.79	

Statement	36		37		38		39		40	
	Mean Score	p value	Mean Score	p value	Mean Score	p value	Mean Score	p value	Mean Score	p value
Leader	1.74	.938	1.35	**.001**	1.51	**.004**	1.33	**.012**	1.41	.055
Teacher	1.77		1.82		2.02		1.72		1.70	
Statement	**41**		**42**		**43**		**44**		**45**	
	Mean Score	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**
Leader	1.52	.102	1.53	.471	1.72	.149	1.44	.447	1.62	.229
Teacher	1.60		1.66		2.01		1.60		1.59	
Statement	**46**		**47**		**48**		**49**		**50**	
	Mean Score	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**
Leader	1.48	.061	1.51	**.005**	1.38	**.003**	1.54	.061	1.81	.137
Teacher	1.79		1.98		1.60		1.79		1.90	
Statement	**51**		**52**		**53**		**54**		**55**	
	Mean Score	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**	**Mean Score**	**p value**
Leader	1.51	.128	2.90	.131	2.13	.055	1.45	**.001**	1.15	**.000**
Teacher	1.80		3.16		1.84		2.02		1.59	
Statement	**56**									
	Mean Score	**p value**								
Leader	1.31	**.000**								
Teacher	1.94									

Table 50. Mean scores and *p* values for leaders' and teachers' responses to scaled items concerning the nature of the K-2 leadership role

Results indicate that there is a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) between leaders' and teachers' responses to 20 of the 56 statements (Statements 9, 13, 14, 15, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 37, 38, 39, 47, 48, 54, 55 and 56). Key themes evident in these statements relate to sharing leadership with teachers, communication between teachers and leaders, and the provision of professional development and support for teachers. Three other statements (Statements 17, 40 and 53) were marginally outside the statistically significant guidelines, used for this study, with *p* values between .051 and .055.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, discussion of the results is provided in the following order:

- Leaders' perceptions of the nature of K-2 leadership in their school.
- Teachers' perceptions of the nature of K-2 leadership in their school.
- Teachers' perceptions of the nature of leadership provided by their most contacted leader in K-2.
- Leaders' and teachers' perceptions regarding the impact leaders' gender, school type, specialisation, position classification, and level of qualifications has on K-2 leadership.
- Perceived impact teachers' school type, specialisation and level of qualifications has on the way teachers view K-2 leadership.
- Perceived impact of lack of early childhood training on how leaders fulfil their K-2 leadership role.
- Greatest challenges for K-2 education, as perceived by leaders and teachers.
- Similarities and differences between leaders' and teachers' perceptions of the K-2 leadership role.

What Are Leaders' Perceptions of the Nature of Leadership in K-2 Education in Their Schools?

This question is addressed by considering the findings of what school leaders in the study perceived to be the most important aspects of their leadership in relation to early childhood education, and then analysing how the leaders perceived themselves to be satisfying the requirements of these aspects of the leadership role.

School leaders highlighted the following as the most important aspects of K-2 leadership.

- Demonstrating trust and support of teachers.
- Helping to improve teaching practice.
- Sharing leadership with K-2 teachers.
- Ensuring that adequate resources are provided for K-2.

Perceptions of Leadership Provided by Leaders in Relation to Trust and Support

The first aspect of leadership highlighted, "demonstration of trust and support of teachers", is a key premise of the invitational perspective of leadership (Stoll & Fink, 1996) and has been shown to be an influential factor in interactions between leaders and teachers which leads to empowerment (Bishop & Mulford, 1996). Principals in this study indicated that they had a high level of trust for their K-2 teachers, regarding their teaching. Of responding principals, 94.5% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "I trust K-2 teachers to teach effectively". It must be noted that an invitational perspective of leadership can only be achieved if a leader is able to demonstrate sound interpersonal skills, and personnel management, including conflict resolution (Stoll & Fink, 1996).

In this study, 31.8% of responding leaders (see Table 22) indicated that interpersonal relationships with teachers, and other school and community members, were strengths within their leadership, with listening and people skills being perceived as key components within this attribute. However, school relationships were also perceived as being an area of leadership weakness for 20.2% of leaders in K-2 (see Table 23). Specific weaknesses, highlighted in this area, included impatience, bossiness, intolerance, lack of sensitivity, and inexperience in the leadership role when dealing with staff members. Acknowledgment of these leadership deficits by leaders in the study indicates that a proportion of K-2 leaders would have difficulty in fulfilling the requirements of a critical area of leadership (Lashway et al. 1996), where skilful communication and sound relationships with others, relying upon patience, are paramount to success.

Personnel management was cited as a primary leadership task by 30.6% of this study's leaders (see Table 24). This is seen as the basis for effective leadership, where a supportive environment, respect for (and trust in) others and compassion for, and sensitivity to others' needs are crucial considerations. This perception, of leaders involved in this study, is in accord with previous research by Grady et al. (1994). Also central to the role of personnel management is the leader's ability to skilfully attend to conflict resolution (Goldring & Rallis, 1993; Beck, 1994; Fullan, 1998). It is of interest, within this study, that school leaders named conflict resolution/negotiation skills and attending to teachers' personal needs as two of the least important leadership factors in K-2 education. Reasons for this variance between perceptions of leaders within this study and findings of previous research may include the following:

- The strong emphasis on supportive school environment in Tasmanian schools, over the past decade, has resulted in all K-2 teachers being more aware of the consequences of, and better equipped to deal with, conflict. It can be assumed that this should have resulted in teachers being more capable at dealing with conflict, requiring less intensive support from school leaders.
- School leaders do not perceive that conflict/negotiation matters, involving the K-2 area of their schools, are major issues within their leadership, possibly because few problems are seen to exist.
- K-2 teachers solve conflict issues by themselves, or with the assistance of other classroom teachers, without reference to school leaders, who therefore may be unaware of the 'degree of leadership' required in this area.

However, results from the leaders' survey (see Table 20) indicate that leaders' perceptions of their leadership, in relation to attention to teachers' personal needs and conflict resolution, suggest that these matters are dealt with effectively and expertly. These perceptions, recorded on a scale of 1 (Strongly Agree) to 4 (Strongly Disagree), are reflected in the low mean scores (1.30 to 1.40) associated with each of the scaled items that are pertinent to these leadership areas. This suggests that the leaders in the study believe that they exhibit sound leadership in conflict resolution and personal support of teachers, although they believe that these areas are not amongst the most important leadership issues.

Perceptions of Leadership Provided by Leaders in Relation to Improving Teaching Practice

School leaders involved in the study believed that "helping to improve teaching practice" was the second most important issue in leadership in K-2

education. Current literature (Leithwood, Begley et al., 1994 and Mortimore et al., 1993) supports this as a key leadership component, suggesting that leaders who personally have well-developed, up-to-date, technical knowledge of K-2 education will be best equipped to address this leadership requirement. A further group of researchers, including Blase & Blase (1997), also support the importance of helping to improve K-2 teachers' technical practice, but suggest that, rather than depending upon personal knowledge, the leader should utilise facilitative processes to bring about the desired improvement. With capable facilitation, a broad spectrum of available information and resources can be accessed and utilised.

Leaders' responses in the study (see Table 22) indicate that 15.9% of K-2 leaders believe that instructional leadership is a personal strength, with 10.1% citing technical knowledge of K-2 education as a specific strength. Simple interpretation indicates that these are likely to be the only leaders who are equipped to be able to provide leadership in improvement of K-2 teaching practices, based upon personal knowledge. By comparison, 11.9% of leaders in the study (see Table 23) acknowledged that their lack of K-2 technical knowledge constituted a leadership weakness. This group of leaders would have to rely upon facilitation as a means of providing improvement in K-2 teaching practice. From these assumptions, the remaining 78% of respondent leaders may be expected to rely upon either means of gaining an improvement in teaching practices. Leaders' responses to individual scaled items in the survey (see Table 20) give some indication of the leaders' capability with both methods of improving teaching practice. As a group, leaders in the study believed that they facilitated training (mean score 1.56) better than they provided training and new knowledge, based upon personal knowledge (mean scores 1.90 to 1.92). This suggests that the 78% of leaders, not classified in their likely

method of improvement earlier, would be more likely to utilise facilitative methods than to rely upon personal technical knowledge.

A possible reason for leaders within the study highlighting the improvement of K-2 teachers' pedagogical practices could be the current increased pressure, from the government and Department of Education, for schools to accept accountability for their educational outcomes. As part of the Assisted Schools Self Review process, school principals, along with their staff and communities, are being deemed accountable for setting and achieving improved student learning outcomes. To successfully accept this accountability, and demonstrate the desired outcomes, the necessity to improve teaching practices is implied.

Perceptions of Leadership Provided by Leaders in Relation to Sharing Leadership with Teachers

The third most important aspect of leadership, highlighted by leaders in the study, concerns "sharing leadership with teachers". Many educational writers, including Blase & Blase (1997), Fullan (1998), Goldring & Rallis (1992), and Leithwood, Begley et al. (1994), contend that shared leadership is a central strategic component utilised by successful leaders. In the study, 35.6% of leaders indicated that they were committed to vision and team-building practices within their leadership in K-2. However, in the survey, only 4.3% of leaders actually identified personal strengths in promoting shared leadership, and only 1.2% nominated shared leadership as an area of personal leadership weakness. Nevertheless, when asked during the study to name the key sources of leadership for K-2 education within their schools, an overwhelming 97% of responses referred to teams of K-2 teachers as the major source of leadership in the early childhood area. This would suggest a belief,

amongst leaders in the study, that the 'shared' aspect of leadership is provided largely at teacher level, with minimal involvement and contribution from designated leaders in the schools.

Leaders' responses to the scaled items in the study's survey (see Table 20) also give further indications of the level of leaders' commitment to team building via shared leadership practices. Statements associated with empowering teachers to take on leadership roles and factors involved in shared leadership (such as shared decision-making, collaborative problem-solving and the team approach to leadership) returned mean scores between 1.18 and 1.45. This suggests that the perception of the leaders in the study was that they strongly believed that they were facilitating the utilisation of shared leadership practices within the early childhood area of their schools.

The perceptions of leaders involved in the study, concerning the importance of shared leadership, show considerable congruence with previous research reported in the literature. The general thrust of these perceptions is that there is recognition of the value of the collaborative, team-based approach in today's educational leadership, and that many leaders are actively utilising this approach in their leadership practices.

Perceptions of Leadership Provided by Leaders in Relation to Provision of Adequate Resources

K-2 leaders, involved in the study, saw the fourth most important component of leadership in the K-2 area as the "provision of adequate resources" to sustain desired educational outcomes in early childhood education. Current literature (Goldring & Rallis, 1993; Blase & Blase, 1997) highlights the importance of

manipulating time, physical resources and personnel in order to achieve high educational results. In this study, the resource-related and organisational aspects of leadership were seen to be personal strengths of 7.6% of leaders (see Table 22), whilst 26.2% acknowledged leadership weaknesses (see Table 23) in the same areas. This significant recognition of specific leadership weakness could have been precipitated by the recent process of devolution of management responsibility, which is occurring in the Tasmanian education system. This process has resulted in much operational management responsibility being devolved from the central Department of Education, and district offices, to the individual schools. The increased school-based management requirements, including management of, and decision-making concerning, resources within the school, may well have highlighted deficiencies in the leadership skills of some school leaders in this area of responsibility.

At school level, management pressures associated with resourcing are also related to the relatively diminishing budgetary provisions. This widely publicised, and recognised, situation increases pressures on school leaders as they manage their schools on the limited staffing and financial resources being provided by the government. These resource-management pressures are further exacerbated by the continuing resource demands associated with the proliferation of school-based curriculum developments and changes.

In addition, 6.9% of leaders in the study referred to resource management as one of their primary leadership tasks (see Table 24), with resourcing associated with staff-related issues being the most commonly named area of concern.

Responses to the survey scaled items (see Table 21) concerning resources, indicate that leaders agree that they are provide teachers with sufficient resources to

enable them to improve their teaching (mean score 1.53). This general satisfaction with current management of resources (despite the perceived weaknesses in leadership skills in this area) is further emphasised by leaders in their responses concerning leadership challenges. Only 3.9% of responses in this section of the study indicated the provision of resources as a key leadership challenge. Those leaders who did refer to resource-related challenges, largely cited concerns regarding the time constraints associated with the implementation of the various curriculum initiatives which are constantly being introduced.

The study findings, concerning resource-related issues, indicated that K-2 leaders, while not seeing resource management as a personal strength, believed that they were meeting the K-2 needs of this ever-increasing educational leadership responsibility. The considerable proportion of K-2 leaders involved in the study, who perceived that they had a weakness in resource management skills, would appear to indicate that consideration may need to be given to the provision of ongoing support in this area for leaders. This support may best be provided in the form of professional development training in resource management for school leaders, to enable them to optimise their effective usage of available resources and develop their capabilities in entrepreneurial development of alternative means of resource generation.

Findings from this study, concerning leaders' perceptions of the nature of K-2 leadership, are generally in congruence with educational literature. Trust and support of leaders, helping to improve teaching practice, sharing leadership, and ensuring the provision of adequate resources were seen as the major leadership concerns. The only aspect not correlating with previous research involved the low

emphasis placed upon conflict resolution by leaders in this study, compared to the opinion of the general importance of this factor reported in the literature.

What Are K-2 Teachers' Perceptions of the Nature of Leadership by Principals in K-2 Education in Their Schools?

The findings, related to teachers' perceptions regarding the nature of the leadership in K-2 education within their school, are addressed in three sections. The first section looks at what teachers perceived to be the four most important leadership issues in early childhood education. Secondly, the findings concerning teachers' perceptions of the principal's role in K-2 education are addressed and then thirdly, how teachers perceive the nature of the role of their most contacted leader, other than the principal, in relation to early childhood education are considered.

K-2 teachers highlighted the following four issues as the most important aspects of leadership in early childhood education and therefore they will be used to guide discussion.

- Demonstrating trust and support of teachers.
- Ensuring adequate resources are provided for K-2.
- Demonstrating a positive leadership presence.
- Helping to improve teaching practice.

Perceptions of Leadership in Relation to Trust and Support

Strong interpersonal relationships within the school and community, founded upon trust and support are important issues in successful leadership (Stoll & Fink, 1996; Bishop & Mulford, 1996). Good leaders trust others (Grady et al., 1994), with trust between all school members being the key to effective leadership, founded

upon empowerment of others (Bishop & Mulford, 1996). In this study, 95% of teachers indicated that they strongly agreed, or agreed, with the statement "trusts K-2 teachers to teach effectively", when considering the principal's role in K-2 leadership (see Table 8). This represents a widespread belief amongst teachers that they are trusted by principals, in relation to their teaching practices. However, despite this perception, and the identification of trust as the most important aspect of leadership, only 4.4% of teachers' responses indicated that they believed that trust was one of their principals' leadership strengths (see Table 11). Also, only 0.6% of responses indicated that trust was an area of leadership weakness for their principals (see Table 12). These perceptions combine to suggest, amongst teachers, a widespread, general satisfaction with principals' trust in their teaching practices, without this leadership feature being widely recognised as a specific strength or weakness of principals.

K-2 teachers, in this study, saw the interpersonal relationships component of leadership as being of crucial importance, with 54.6% of responses naming this aspect as a leadership strength of their principal (See Table 11). The teachers frequently named interpersonal skills such as active listening, approachability, and supportiveness, as key leadership strengths.

However, school relationships were also named by participating teachers as an area of significant leadership weakness of principals, with 51.8% of teachers' responses referring to this deficit (See Table 12). Conflict management skills were seen as aspects of weakness in principals' leadership. The specific areas of challenging people and dealing with behaviour management were cited as being important issues. Effective interpersonal skills in relation to conflict management (Louis & Murphy, 1994), are key facets of purposeful and strong leadership by the

principal. The high level of negativity expressed by so many teachers in this study, regarding principals' deficits in this key interpersonal skill, is of considerable concern irrespective of the gender of the principal. It would appear to indicate that some principals require professional development in conflict management, in relation to dealing with both adults and children.

Support for this suggestion is further seen in the teachers' responses to one statement, concerning the nature of the principal's role in K-2 education, which states "demonstrates ineffective interpersonal skills", where 28% of teachers responded with Strongly Agree or Agree (see Table 8). This is a revealing response, further supporting the notion that some principals in this study demonstrated specific weaknesses in interpersonal skills.

Personnel management, another leadership area associated with trust and support, was identified in the study as the second most important primary leadership task for the principal. It featured in 19.7% of teachers' responses (See Table 13), with teacher-related issues being named most frequently by respondents. Central to these issues were matters related to support of teachers. However, it is noted that teachers rated attention to K-2 teachers' personal needs as being the least important facet of leadership. A major reason for this may be that teachers feel that they have a network in place which they utilise for meeting their personal support needs. This may often involve collegial support from other teachers or from their most contacted leader, not usually the principal. In fact, teachers may not even recognise attention to their personal needs as a part of the principal's role in leadership. Another reason may be reflected by teachers, particularly in smaller schools, who currently believe that they have quality support in this area from their principals. Therefore, in their

satisfaction, they may not recognise attention to personal needs of teachers as meriting inclusion as a key facet of leadership.

Nonetheless, there also appears to be a core of teachers who consider their principal, although undertaking personnel management tasks, to be failing to attend to these tasks in an effective manner. Further investigation of the study's findings reveals that 5.0% of teachers, who referred to their principal's weakness in personnel management, also rated the statement "attends to K-2 teachers' personal needs" as one of the five most important leadership tasks in K-2 education.

Of particular interest was the fact that all but one of the teachers who perceived that their principals had weaknesses in interpersonal skills and in personnel management (particularly in teacher-related matters) were referring to male principals. This supports previous research (Shakeshaft, 1995; Macbeath et al., 1996), which indicates that women leaders have been found to have more effective communication and greater support-based skills in personnel management.

Results from the teachers' perceptions of the principal's role in K-2 education indicate that 35% of teachers responded to the statement "provides pastoral care for K-2 teachers" with a Strongly Disagree or Disagree rating (See Table 8). This further supports the suggestion that a group of responding teachers had real concerns about the level of support and care being provided by their principals.

In relation to interpersonal matters regarding students, teachers referred to principals' lack of effectiveness in behaviour management, as well as to their failure to support teachers and to follow through with incidents of difficult student behaviour. This response is indicative of the increased pressures currently being felt by teachers in schools when dealing with student matters, especially extreme incidents of inappropriate behaviour. Support, follow up, and guidance for teachers

in behaviour management is a central role in school leadership and there are clear indications that there were teachers participating in this study who perceived that they were failing to receive adequate support in this regard. Principals who have weaknesses in this area of leadership need to reassess their support for teachers when dealing with students' inappropriate behaviour. A combination of the following may need to occur. Teachers may need further instruction concerning correct procedures for dealing with students' negative behaviour, and likewise principals may require similar professional development in provision of assistance to teachers. Added to this, whole schools may need to re-evaluate their behaviour management policies to rectify anomalies in the existing systems in order to assist teachers to feel more in control and less in need of the principal's support when handling episodes of inappropriate behaviour. Greater clarity in schools' processes involving behaviour management may give rise to improved strategies for dealing with students' behaviour for both the principal and teachers.

Support from the principal is important in quality leadership, and in this study the principal was perceived by teachers to be one of three most influential sources of leadership in K-2 by teachers (See Table 7), with 48% of respondents referring to this source of leadership. Although they referred to teams of teachers and individual classroom teachers as more influential sources of leadership in K-2, the importance and ultimate power of the principal in key issues of personnel management must be neither overlooked nor devalued. Personnel management, founded on strong interpersonal relationships, is the cornerstone of successful leadership.

There appear to be two groups of teachers in this study, with basically opposing views on the effectiveness of their principal in relation to the leadership aspect of "demonstrating trust and support of teachers". One group perceives that

their present principal displays leadership strengths in interpersonal and support skills (see Table 11), whilst another group have substantial concerns regarding the principal's ability to provide adequate leadership in this regard (see Table 12).

Perceptions of Leadership in Relation to Provision of Adequate Resources

The second most important aspect of leadership highlighted by K-2 teachers in this study was "ensuring adequate resources are provided for K-2" (See Table 6). The importance of providing adequate time, as well as physical and personnel resources, are key aspects of successful leadership (Goldring & Rallis, 1993; Blase & Blase, 1997). In this study, only 5.0% of teachers' responses referred to principals' strengths (see Table 11) in resourcing and organisational aspects of leadership, with an even lower number (2.4%) indicating (see Table 12) that the principal had weaknesses in these leadership aspects. Furthermore, only 0.5% of responses referred to personnel and physical resourcing tasks as a primary leadership task (see Table 13) for the principal. This is indeed an interesting finding, considering the devolution of responsibility from the central education authority to school-based management of resources. Increased managerial pressures have subsequently been imposed upon the principal, but teachers in this study failed to refer to this, possibly indicating lack of recognition of the situation by them, perhaps as a result of poor communication from their principals regarding increased school accountabilities. On a more positive note, it could also indicate that teachers, although not seeing resourcing and organisational issues as leadership strengths, weaknesses or primary tasks within the role of their principal, are relatively happy with the way these procedures are being undertaken in their school.

In the question seeking teachers' responses to the greatest challenges for school leaders in K-2 education, 7.1% of teachers' responses referred to the need for increased funding for K-2 education (see table 10). Specific needs were identified in relation to funding for the inclusion of special needs children into mainstream schooling, the appointment of full-time teacher assistants for all Kindergarten and Prep classes in Tasmanian schools and the provision of additional support for children with specific learning needs.

Overall, although indicating that the provision of adequate resourcing is a core issue in leadership for K-2 education, teachers indicated that at present they do not believe that the principal has a major role in this resourcing process. Furthermore, a more serious concern is the fact that they may even fail to fully understand the nature and extent of the principal's responsibility in this important managerial task, placing their responsibility for poor utilisation of funds with the funding department, rather than principals. However, in specific cases, teachers referred to inequitable distribution of resources across the various sectors within schools, often perceived to be to the detriment of early childhood education. Principals need to be more proactive in this area, informing teachers about processes utilised and the level of time commitment necessary in the management of personnel, physical, and financial resources within their leadership role.

Perceptions of Leadership in Relation to Positive Leadership Presence

Teachers in this study saw the third most important leadership aspect in relation to K-2 education, as being concerned with the leader "demonstrating a positive leadership presence". Positive leadership presence in classrooms and in the

school in general (Mortimore et al., 1993) is an important facet of educational leadership.

In this study, when teachers were asked to rate the principal's role, on a scale of 1 (Strongly Agree) to 4 (Strongly Disagree), regarding the statement "has a positive presence in the K-2 area of the school", 40% responded with a Strongly Disagree or Disagree rating (see Table 8). Reasons for this negative response could possibly be attributed to the physical distance between the principal's office and K-2 classrooms, which is quite substantial in many Tasmanian schools. This suggested barrier is supported by previous research (Rodd, 1994), which raises the issue of the isolation of many early childhood classrooms and how this can impact adversely on classroom teachers. However, this can not be taken as an acceptable reason for such a negative response from teachers in this study. School principals need to take time to be seen in K-2 classrooms because, at present, this is obviously an area of concern for many K-2 teachers.

Another leadership issue, which is directly related to the principal having a positive presence in the K-2 education of the school, relates to the issue of accessibility of the principal for school members. Accessibility to the principal was seen by 10.1% of responding teachers as a leadership weakness of many of their principals (see Table 12), especially when related to teachers and children. Access to the principal by school personnel is important, if strong interpersonal relationships are to be formed, and built upon, within the school community. When considering areas in their principals' leadership skills that could be improved, one teacher commented "not being out of the school so much", which raises a real accessibility concern for teachers. Being out of the school undertaking other responsibilities, which are not seen as a benefit to the school as a whole, can be resented by teachers

and can lead to discontent amongst staff members. Reasons for principals' failure to be accessible to school personnel could include the fact that principals are increasingly being asked by the Education Department to be part of information sessions, associated with new departmental initiatives. Such pressures can leave the principal with the personal dilemma of deciding the more effective way of spending time, in the school or attending sessions related to new departmental initiatives.

In this study, responding teachers clearly indicated that they believed that it was essential for principals to have time available for the K-2 area of the school, to specifically visit classrooms, and interact with both teachers and children. The following comments, from two respondents, capture the feelings of many teachers in this study, when they stated that their principals' leadership skills could be improved in relation to... "relating to young children – all a bit foreign and too difficult" and "he doesn't come near EC classes unless he has to". School leaders must be accessible to teachers if they are to provide adequate support, care and effective leadership (Bishop, 1998).

Further to this, another item on the teachers' survey, regarding the nature of the principal's role in K-2 education, states "is not easily accessible to K-2 teachers". Strongly agreeing or agreeing with this statement were 34% of teachers (See Table 8), once again indicating that there was a significant proportion of teachers who perceived that their principal needed to be more available for K-2 teachers.

Making time available for teachers and children is also essential in building a strong school community and this can only be achieved by being involved in K-2 classrooms on a daily basis. Avoiding the K-2 area of the school in favour of being seen in older grades, which was cited by some teachers as a deficit aspect in their

principals' leadership, can only lead to communication problems and ill feeling on the staff team.

When responding to a number of questions in this study with specific reference to accessibility to, and the presence of, the principal in the K-2 area of the school, a significant number of respondents consistently indicated perceptions of shortfalls in their principals' leadership skills in these areas.

Perceptions of Leadership in Relation to Helping to Improve Teaching Practice

Teachers in this study believed that "helping to improve teaching practice" was the fourth most important leadership aspect, when considering K-2 education. Recent research (Rodd, 1994; Leithwood, Begley et al., 1994) indicates that school leaders need to have a sound understanding and knowledge of the technical core of education to be able to support and assist teachers to improve their teaching practices. If this is not possible, school leaders need to have the means of facilitating the provision of support structures (Blase & Blase, 1997) to enable teachers to improve their teaching practice.

When considering whether the principals, referred to by responding teachers in this study, had the capability to personally assist teachers to improve their teaching practice, three statements concerning the nature of the principal's role (see Table 8) in relation to K-2 education were able to provide valuable information. Fifty percent of teachers responded to "provides information on current educational thought in early childhood education to K-2 teachers" with a Strongly Disagree or Disagree response. Likewise, "is unable to assist teachers to improve their teaching practices owing to the personal lack of technical knowledge" returned another significantly

negative response, with 39% of teachers indicating that they Strongly Agree or Agree with this statement.

Furthermore, if the principal is to personally assist teachers to improve their teaching practices, it would be appropriate to assume that he/she should "possess a sound knowledge of what K-2 students need to learn", another of the survey's statements. Teachers' responses to this statement were also a concern in respect of principals' skills in this area, with 49% of responding teachers returning a Strongly Disagree or Disagree response. The responses to these three statements indicate that a minimum of 50% of responding teachers believe that their principals would not be capable of personally assisting them to improve their teaching practice. Reasons for this perceived deficit in principals' knowledge of K-2 education could be accounted for by the fact that only 10% of responding teachers had a principal with an early childhood teaching specialisation. Of these teachers, 90% indicated that they Strongly Agreed or Agreed that their principal possessed sound knowledge of K- 2 practices and provided information on current educational thought in early childhood education to teachers. Furthermore, they indicated that they Strongly Disagreed or Disagreed that their principal was unable to assist teachers to improve their teaching practices, owing to a personal lack of technical knowledge. This is strong evidence to support previous research (Rodd, 1994: Leithwood, Begley et al., 1994) and it has real implications for the quality of support the principal can provide in the technical domain of leadership in K-2 education, which can not be underestimated.

Considering the teachers' responses concerning the leadership strengths of their principals, only 4.4% of these responses indicated the belief that principals had the knowledge to assist with instructional issues (see Table 11), whilst only 0.6% referred to the principal being able to provide technical assistance with teaching.

Only 1.6% of teachers' responses referred to their principals having a primary leadership task involving leading professional development for K-2 teachers (see Table 13). These findings support the previous results, which indicate that the majority of teachers in this study do not believe that their principals have the technical understanding or capabilities to be able to personally assist in developing their teaching practice.

A key reason for this trend is related to the gender imbalance, which exists in two areas. Traditionally in Tasmania (over the past 30 years), few males have undertaken training in K-2 education and therefore there has been, and still is, a dearth of qualified male early childhood teachers. Secondly, in this study, 78% of responding teachers reported to a male principal. The compounding effect of these two imbalances results in only 10% of responding teachers having a principal with specialised training in the early childhood area of education.

In relation to principals utilising facilitative modes to enhance K-2 teaching practices, 9.0% of teachers' responses indicated that the principal in their school managed the professional development as a primary leadership task (see Table 15), with 3.5% of responses indicating principals possession of strengths in providing appropriate professional development for teachers' educational growth needs see Table 11). These percentages are very low, especially when considering that Tasmanian principals will soon have to ensure, as part of a departmental requirement, that every teacher has a professional development plan.

If teachers perceive that there are such significant deficits in principals' technical knowledge of K-2 education, and only a very small percentage of teachers believe that their principal facilitates teachers' professional development, how are

K-2 teachers being assisted with improving their teaching practices? In the worst scenario, it could be suggested that teachers are not undertaking any professional development to enhance their teaching. One possibility could be that this form of pedagogical leadership is provided for teachers by their most contacted leader, rather than the principal. As teachers indicated that the most influential source of leadership for them came from teams of teachers (71%) and from individual classroom teachers (67%) (see Table 7), it is possible that these could be the sources of their professional support and development.

If this is the case, then questions related to quality of the provision must be asked. Are these teams and individual teachers capable of providing appropriate leadership in pedagogical aspects of K-2 education? On the other hand, are teachers so busy coping with increased departmental demands in relation to accountability imperatives, as well as school based initiatives, that they are failing to address their own personal development needs in relation to improving their teaching practice. These are questions that go beyond the parameters of this study, but are an issue of central importance given that K-2 teachers in this study indicated that provision of help to improve their teaching practices was the fourth most important facet of leadership.

What are K-2 Teachers' Perceptions of the Nature of Leadership Provided by Their Most Contacted Leader in K-2 Education in Their Schools?

In this study, 83% of K-2 teachers indicated that they referred to one of their designated leaders as their most contacted staff member for leadership. The breakdown among the various classifications, as shown in Figure 9, was AP (30%),

AST 3 (8%) and AST 2 (45%). The low percentage of teachers naming an AST 3 is indicative of the low incidence of this substantive position in Tasmanian schools, where only 10% of teachers indicated this classification as part of their schools' leadership structure.

Furthermore, 17% of teachers referred to classroom teachers and AST 1s for leadership. This finding reflects the position in smaller Tasmanian schools, where there is only one substantive leadership position, that of principal. This necessitates teachers developing close links with other classroom teachers for purposes of support and leadership. All of the 17% of teachers, who referred to fellow classroom teachers (which includes AST 1s) were from schools in this situation.

As with the previous discussion, regarding the nature of leadership provided by the principals, teachers' most contacted leaders are now considered in relation to the four most important aspects of leadership in early childhood education identified by teachers in the study. These aspects are demonstrating trust and support, ensuring that resources are provided for K-2, demonstrating a positive leadership presence, and helping to improve teaching practice.

Perceptions of Leadership in Relation to Trust and Support

Teachers, in this study, saw the most important facet of leadership as, "demonstration of trust and support of teachers". Trust in others was recognised as a crucial component of successful leadership, with 92.8% of teachers in this study indicating that their most contacted leader "trusts K-2 teachers to teach effectively". Furthermore, as mentioned previously in this discussion, trust is also an influential ingredient in relationships between teachers and leaders (Bishop & Mulford, 1996;

and Grady et al., 1994), where the leader's level of interpersonal skills and personnel management are of a high standard.

When teachers in this study were considering their most contacted leaders in respect of the statement "demonstrates effective interpersonal skills", 91.8% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed. Likewise, 92.9% of teachers indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed that their most contacted leader "demonstrates effective conflict resolution skills within the school community". Two other statements are linked to central components of interpersonal skills, "respects opinions of K-2 teachers" and "shows sensitivity to K-2 teachers". When considering their most contacted leader, 94.8% and 89.7% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed to these two statements respectively.

When teachers were asked to consider leadership strengths of their most contacted staff member, 19.4% of responses were related to interpersonal skills (see Table 15), with high level skills in listening and approachability being frequently cited. However, there were also 14.2% of responses which indicated interpersonal skill deficits in their most contacted staff member's leadership (see Table 16). Poor communication skills, failure to give serious consideration to teachers' concerns, being too outspoken, lack of assertiveness with males, and not being approachable, were listed as examples of the staff members' weaknesses. When teachers gave their reasons for turning to their most contacted staff member, 18.0% of responses were related to interpersonal skills (see Table 14). Once again, key skills of active listening, approachability, honesty, friendliness, and strong personal skills were cited as reasons why teachers turned to their most contacted staff member for leadership.

When these findings are considered in combination, there was a strong belief amongst responding teachers that their most contacted leader had high level

interpersonal skills, although there also appears to be a small group of teachers who were dissatisfied with their most contacted leader. Insights into possible reasons for this dissatisfaction may be gained by considering some teachers' responses to why they turned to their most contacted staff member for leadership (see Table 14). For example, 8.1% of teachers' responses gave reasons such as "...you have to. The principal says to ask her", or "because the AST 2 in this school has the role of looking after the ECE section" or "because it's protocol and he is the nominated person". These reasons tend to indicate reluctance on the part of respondents towards working with their most contacted leader, indicating that they only work alongside this person because they are told to do so by the principal, or that the person is the designated leader. Therefore, this could explain why approximately 8% of teachers indicated in the scaled items that they strongly disagree or disagree that their most contacted staff member has effective interpersonal and conflict resolution skills, and that they respect opinions and show sensitivity to K-2 teachers.

Support is another integral component in successful leadership, where provision of pastoral care is a key imperative (Grady et al., 1994; Wylie,-1997). When considering the issue of support provided by teachers' most contacted leader in this study, responses to three of the survey statements provide valuable information. The first statement is "provides pastoral care for K-2 teachers", where 86% of teachers responded with Strongly Agree or Agree regarding their most contacted leader. The second statement, "attends to K-2 teachers' needs in a reliable manner", received Strongly Agree or Agree ratings from 87% of teachers. The third statement, "responds to K-2 teachers' personal concerns with consideration", had a 94% Strongly Agree or Agree rating from teachers.

Furthermore, when teachers were asked to name leadership strengths of their most contacted leader, 17.9% of responses referred to support, reliability, and pastoral care matters (see Table 15). Specific pastoral care traits mentioned by teachers were staff members' "caring approach", "compassion" and "empathy", and reliability traits included "responds to concerns", "dependable", and "consistent". Only minor weaknesses were noted by a small group of teachers when considering the leadership of their most contacted staff member, in relation to pastoral care and support (see Table 16).

Teachers provided many reasons for turning to their most contacted leader, related to support and pastoral care (see Table 14), with 16.9% of teachers' responses containing references to these issues, and comments, such as compassionate, cares for children and teachers, and has time for others, were commonly recorded. When teachers' responses to the various questions in the study related to pastoral care were considered, it appeared that the majority of K-2 teachers were happy with the way their most contacted staff member attends to this aspect of their leadership. Nonetheless, there was another small group of teachers who believed their most contacted leader was lacking in support and pastoral care. A couple of comments recognising confidentiality were received from teachers, such as "not divulging all information said in confidence (to her) to the principal" and "not telling others in the school what bad things happened in my classroom". Confidentiality is a vital component of support and pastoral care in leadership and there would appear to be a few within the group of most contacted leaders who need to give this aspect of their leadership more attention.

Perceptions of Leadership in Relation to Provision of Adequate Resources

The second most important leadership aspect highlighted by teachers in this study was "ensuring adequate resources are provided for K-2" (see Table 6). The importance of providing adequate physical, financial and personnel resources in leadership has been well documented (Goldring & Rallis, 1993; Blase & Blase, 1997). In this study, 82.7% of teachers indicated that they Strongly Agree or Agree with the statement "helps K-2 teachers to get the necessary resources to help improve their teaching effectiveness" when considering their most contacted staff member's leadership. However, as 17.3% of teachers indicated that they disagreed with this statement, it indicates that there is still a substantial group of teachers who believe that resourcing, which was intended to improve K-2 teaching, was inadequate. Increased resourcing needs were also cited in 7.1% of teachers' responses when considering the greatest challenges for K-2 education today (see Table 10).

When reviewing teachers' responses to resourcing issues, few comments were received concerning their most contacted staff member's leadership strengths. However, 13.2% of teachers' responses referred to deficits in their most contacted staff member's organisational skills, especially related to time issues (see Table 16). Teachers, indicating that they believed that their leaders were impeded in effectively carrying out leadership for K-2, noted examples of limitations due to time constraints. These comments referred to the most contacted leader as being "overworked", and needing "more time to do the job properly", as well as indicating that teachers recognised that there were considerable pressures with the dual roles of teaching and leadership being undertaken by so many K-2 leaders today. On two occasions teachers referred to recent poor health of their most contacted leaders.

When teachers' responses, regarding the greatest challenges for K-2 education today, were investigated, 12.2% of these responses related to time issues (see Table 10). Aspects noted by respondents included leaders having time for visiting classrooms, time to lead efficiently, departmental officers needing to recognise the amount of pressure involved in teaching, and leading concurrently. These comments from teachers indicate that the pressures of providing leadership in K-2, as well as successfully completing varying teaching commitments (as experienced by many of the responding teachers' most contacted staff members), are well known and openly recognised as important problems by K-2 teachers. However, this does little to alleviate the pressures and stresses of trying to effectively undertake the dual roles of teaching and leadership, currently experienced by many K-2 senior staff members in Tasmanian schools.

With dwindling resources and the increased incidence of educational change being experienced by school leaders today, it would seem expedient to ensure that the teachers' most contacted leaders, who hold senior staff status, have time available to effectively and efficiently undertake their leadership role. If this demands less time for teaching to provide more time for leading, so be it. Schools need resources in order to provide educational outcomes which will benefit their communities. As part of providing the necessary resources, school principals need to allow time for leadership from their senior staff members as a high priority in the provisions for their schools.

Greater educational changes demand greater leadership support for classroom teachers, to enable them to achieve the intended outcomes currently expected by their school communities in Tasmanian schools. Failure to provide strong leadership from skilled practitioners will only lead down the path towards increased stress and

pressure for classroom teachers. The current, increasing practice of teachers relying on other classroom teachers for leadership, as seen in this study when 67% of teachers named individual classroom teachers as their second most influential source of leadership (see Table 7), can only be a short-term solution. What teachers will need in the long-term is strong, effective leadership from leaders who have the power to ensure that things change.

What implications does this have for K-2 education? Teachers need the support and experience of strong leaders who can help them to maximise their teaching potential. This requires leaders who are available and not constrained by competing pressures of teaching and leading. Time to lead is essential and K-2 education should benefit if teachers feel more supported and encouraged on a daily basis by caring leaders, who have time available for leading them.

Perceptions of Leadership in Relation to Positive Leadership Presence

Teachers, in this study, indicated that "demonstrating a positive leadership presence in K-2" was the third most important aspect of leadership in K-2 education (see Table 6). Previous research has shown that successful leadership is founded upon the positive presence of a leader (Leithwood & Aitken, 1995; Stoll & Fink, 1996). Key facets of leaders demonstrating a positive presence include being accessible to teachers and spending time talking with them. In this study, 20.6% of teachers indicated that their most contacted staff member was "not easily accessible to K-2 teachers" when required. Indeed, only 1.2% of teachers' responses referred to the most contacted staff member having leadership strengths in this aspect (see Table 15), whilst 3.5% of responses made specific reference to accessibility weaknesses in their most contacted staff member's leadership (see Table 16).

These findings are cause for some concern, with over 20% of K-2 teachers perceiving that they do not have easy access to their most contacted leader. Teachers' responses, indicating the reasons why they turn to their most contacted staff member, provide some guidance towards gaining greater understanding of this issue. In 7.8% of their responses, teachers referred to accessibility issues (see Table 14), with comments such as "he works close by", "she's in my classroom block" and "she's always about". In all of these comments teachers refer to the ready availability of their most contacted staff member, either due to close proximity of classes or offices, or that their leader is 'always around', and therefore accessible when assistance is required.

Being available to provide leadership is essential, as is the importance of having leaders located in close proximity to K-2 classrooms. In Tasmania, some school locations have early childhood senior staff offices located in the main office block or on another campus (which can be some minutes in a car), resulting in there being a considerable physical separation between K-2 classrooms and senior staff offices. Early childhood teachers in this study have commented that one of the main reasons they turn to their most contacted leader is because he/she is accessible. As one respondent commented, K-2 leaders "must be more available". Therefore, it would seem that locating leaders in close proximity to K-2 teachers and classrooms, is an important issue to be considered when establishing schools' physical layouts, in order that ready accessibility, associated with quality leadership, is promoted.

Another K-2 teacher's comment, related to accessibility of the most contacted staff member, reflects a different concern. This teacher stated "I had a really hard time in our school, as I was the only early childhood teacher". Some K-2 teachers in smaller sized Tasmanian schools face this dilemma. Frequently, these schools are in

'hard-to-staff' locations and often become teaching appointments for newly graduated teachers, who arguably have the greatest need for quality leadership. Having no other K-2 teacher, or appropriately skilled senior staff member, available to assist and provide support, must result in considerable pressure on these new teachers. A K-2 leadership support structure is needed for novice teachers, even if access is only via phone, fax or e-mail to a K-2 leader located in another school. Questions have to be asked about what impact this lack of access to an appropriate leadership source is having on the quality of K-2 education provision in these smaller schools.

The provision of quality time for K-2 teachers, by their most contacted leader, is another facet of accessibility and positive presence. In this study, 17.4% of K-2 teachers indicated that their most contacted leader "fails to allow time to regularly talk with K-2 teachers". Teachers commented that their most contacted leader "needs more time to do the job properly" and "needs less pressure so she can come to our rooms without rushing". Further to this, 35% of teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that their most contacted leader "regularly discusses activities in their classrooms with K-2 teachers". This statement clearly indicates that there is a group of most contacted leaders who are perceived as failing to provide positive leadership presence in K-2 classrooms. In 5.3% of teachers' responses, specific references were made to weaknesses in leadership presence, regarding their most contacted leader (see Table 16). Comments received included "only turn to this staff member when we can find him", "needs to be seen in early childhood rooms", "needs to be on the same campus" and "he's a good leader, but hard to locate". These responses are indicative of some of the issues, related to leadership presence, raised by responding teachers in this study.

Positive leadership presence is a key issue in the provision of quality early childhood education in Australia (Rodd, 1994). In this study, K-2 teachers' responses to specific questions, related to accessibility to, and the presence of, their most contacted leader, indicate that there is a group of leaders whom teachers perceive are failing to respond appropriately to this key aspect of leadership. As mentioned in the previous section of this discussion, concerning resourcing implications for K-2 education, time may once again be a crucial imperative in the provision of quality leadership by K-2 leaders. Time to be available for, and to have access to, K-2 teachers and their students, is central to ensuring that early childhood education leadership is of sufficiently high quality.

Perceptions of Leadership in Relation to Helping to Improve Teaching Practice

Results of this study indicate that K-2 teachers saw "helping to improve teaching practice in K-2" as the fourth most important leadership aspect in early childhood education. Previous research (Rodd, 1994; Stamopoulos, 1998) has indicated that K-2 school leaders need sound knowledge and an understanding of K-2 education, if they wish to provide highly effective leadership in assisting classroom teachers to improve their teaching practice. However, this requires leaders having the personal knowledge of K-2 pedagogy, or being able to facilitate the provision of support by others who have superior teaching expertise in K-2.

When considering teachers' most contacted leader's level of personal knowledge of K-2 education, two statements in the survey supply some valuable information. In their responses, 84.2% of teachers indicated that their most contacted leader "possesses a sound knowledge of what K-2 students need to learn" and

likewise, 83.7% of teachers believed that their leader "demonstrates excellent pedagogical skills in K-2 education". In further support of these findings, K-2 teachers also indicated, in 12.0% of their responses, that their most contacted leader had leadership strengths in this regard and demonstrated sound knowledge of K-2 education.

When they were asked to qualify why they turn to their most contacted leader, responding teachers also provided reasons related to pedagogical knowledge of K-2 education, with 19.4% of teachers' responses related to knowledge issues (see Table 14). Comments about their leaders included "keeps on updating knowledge", "has experience in K-2 education and classrooms", and "knows what EC children need to learn".

Nonetheless, there was a group of responding teachers who perceived that their most contacted leader had deficits in this area of leadership, and 13.2% of responses indicated that their most contacted leader had personal weaknesses in the technical core of K-2 education (see Table 16). "Needs to update philosophy of K-2 education", "primary trained, doesn't know about ECE", and "only temporary in this position, doesn't understand what K-2 learning is about" were comments received which indicated the concerns of teachers.

Overall, there appears to be a large proportion of teachers' most contacted leaders who are seen as having strong personal expertise in K-2 philosophy, although there is a group of K-2 teachers who do not support this. All K-2 leaders need to be committed to enhancing their personal knowledge and expertise in early childhood education. Like all areas of education, early childhood education has been, and still is, undergoing significant educational change. What was right for K-2 education ten or twenty years ago will not necessarily be relevant for the next millenium. Leaders

in K-2 need to be committed to ongoing professional learning to enable constant updating of their personal philosophy to occur.

The need for teachers' most contacted leader to have credibility, in regard to their personal technical knowledge, is also vital. If K-2 teachers believe that their leaders with a background in primary education subsequently fails, in the teachers' eyes, to demonstrate competence in early childhood teaching, their overall credibility in leadership matters and their potential to manage purposeful change in K-2 education, will be threatened. Promoting inappropriate teaching practices, at best, is likely to result in non-cooperation from K-2 teachers and, at worst, may induce open revolt from teachers and attacks on the leader's ability to lead.

There is a further aspect which requires consideration when discussing how K-2 teachers' most contacted leaders can help to improve teaching practice in K-2 education. The capability of the leader in assisting teachers to enhance teaching and learning processes is also significant. Most K-2 teachers (91.8%) strongly agreed or agreed that their most contacted leader had the personal knowledge to assist them to improve their teaching practices. However, when teachers were asked to indicate whether their most contacted leader "regularly provides information that helps K-2 teachers to implement new programs", 25% of teachers strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement. These responses provide the interesting conclusion that 17% of teachers in the study believed that their most contacted leaders possess the necessary knowledge but fail to regularly assist teachers by utilising this knowledge.

Reasons for this disparity could include the following. K-2 leaders may have few opportunities within their schools to provide information regarding new programs, suitable for K-2. Over the past five years, departmental officers, as part of

Literacy, Flying Start, and other professional development, have undertaken much of this responsibility in respect of K-2 teachers. As a result, some leaders may have lost sight of their ongoing leadership responsibilities in this area, relying upon the input from 'experts' to satisfy the professional development needs of teachers. Another reason, already highlighted in other sections of this discussion, could be that, with greater responsibility for school management structures being handled by school leaders, little time has been available for attending to enhancement of K-2 programs, with school leaders striving to cope with wider school-based priorities. With limited time available to be with teachers in classrooms, perhaps leaders are not greatly aware of areas in teaching practice, particularly associated with new programs, where teachers may require professional development and assistance. Possibly of more concern is the fact that some school leaders may see little need for K-2 teachers to be provided with current information, concerning new programs or initiatives, related to enhancing or updating K-2 teaching and learning.

Another possible reason, reflected in comments from a couple of teachers regarding their K-2 leaders' leadership weaknesses, may be that some K-2 leaders are failing to fully enhance their own personal knowledge of current K-2 initiatives. Therefore, they may not feel capable of leading other K-2 teachers in developing and/or implementing new programs.

It is interesting to note that, over the past decade, the association which promoted and fostered K-2 leaders' professional development, has gradually become less effective, resulting in a dramatic loss of membership amongst K-2 leaders. This has meant that the association has undergone substantial membership changes, from being specifically for leaders to now encompassing all early childhood teachers. This change has meant that K-2 leaders have lost an avenue to allow them to attend

professional development sessions with other leaders, with similar levels of responsibility.

When responding teachers were asked to consider whether their most contacted leader "provides extended training to help to develop K-2 teachers' knowledge and skills", 30.2% of them indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed. This negative response rate could be contributed to by the fact that only 49% of teachers' most contacted leaders have a teaching specialisation in early childhood education (see Figure 11). Once again this can cause problems with professional development provisions. Nevertheless, utilising the technical knowledge and skills of other K-2 personnel, to facilitate teachers' ongoing professional development can alleviate this problem. It would appear that this may be the case in many schools, as 83.7% of K-2 teachers in this study, responded with agree or strongly agree to the statement that their most contacted leader "actively supports K-2 teachers' professional development needs". It is logical to assume that, if teachers believe that their own K-2 leader can not provide this professional development, then leaders must be supporting teachers' development by other means, the most common of which is by the use of facilitative processes. Time constraints, associated with leaders' broad spectrum of accountabilities, would obviously be another factor contributing to the teachers' perception that there is a lack of training provision from their most contacted leaders.

When considering these findings, concerning the most contacted leader's ability to improve teaching practices in early childhood education, some diverse observations are highlighted. The majority of K-2 teachers believe that their most contacted leader displays excellent pedagogical skills in K-2 education, related to what students, in the first four years of schooling, need to learn. However, there is a

group of K-2 leaders, who are perceived by teachers, to display weaknesses in this regard. Furthermore, provision of extended training implementation of new programs in K-2 education, are not perceived as strengths of their most contacted leaders, with over 25% of responding teachers indicating concern in these regards. What does this mean for the provision of quality K-2 education? The over-riding effects of time constraints, associated with modern school-based accountabilities, contribute greatly to limiting the effectiveness of most contacted leaders, in the provision of guidance for teachers in enhancement of their teaching practice. Does it mean that more and more K-2 leaders are having to 'out-source' professional development? This will probably be the most effective means for many leaders to ensure that the development needs of their early childhood teaching staff are met. Leaders who utilise this approach will require well-developed facilitative skills to ensure that the desired outcomes, in terms of appropriate enhancement of teachers' practices and knowledge, are achieved. One possible shortfall in this approach, in the perceptions of some narrow-viewed teachers, may be that the leaders' credibility will be damaged, due to a perceived failure in 'not being able' to personally provide the development.

What Perceived Impact Does the Leader's Gender, School Type, Specialisation, Position Classification, and Level of Qualifications Have on Leadership in K-2 Education?

This sub-question of the study is addressed by utilising the findings of the survey's statistical analyses of leaders' perceptions of their own leadership capabilities in comparison with teachers' perceptions of their principal and their most contacted leader. Differences in perceptions, based upon leaders' gender and school

type, specialisation, level of qualifications, and position classification, were considered for each of the factors, obtained from the factor analysis.

Leaders' Perceptions

Of the fourteen factors identified by factor analysis, leaders' responses in respect to empowerment, team building, reliability, communication, consultation, teachers' knowledge, recognition, and high performance, showed no significant differences when considering any of the leaders' demographic groupings given above.

Impact of Gender

Three factors (energy, relationships, and leaders' knowledge) all returned statistically significant differences when the perceptions of male and female leaders were considered (see Table 36). Female leaders perceived that they were more energetic, had better relationships with school personnel, and had greater knowledge of pedagogical matters in K-2 education than male leaders' perceptions indicated. These findings concur with previous research which indicates that women are better at relationships (Porter, 1995; Shakeshaft, 1995), demonstrate more collaborative working relationships (Regan, 1995; Hurty, 1995; Fullan, 1991), and have greater levels of emotional energy (Hurty, 1995) than their male counterparts.

Investigation, of these three factors, reveals some interesting issues. In relationships, female leaders believed they provide high levels of pastoral care and demonstrate respect towards teachers. As well, their relationships with parents are positive and they lead by personal example. By comparison, male leaders rated their leadership in these areas lower than females perceived themselves. Reasons for these

perceptions could include the following. Owing to the gender imbalance in favour of female teachers in Tasmanian K-2 classes, female leaders may feel better able to develop strong interpersonal relationships with teachers, being the same sex. Support for this comes from one teacher who responded that the reason she turned to her most contacted leader was "she's female so I relate easily to her". This may also be the case in relation to parents, where (in the author's experience) mothers are more likely than fathers to be involved in the education of their child in the K-2 area of the school. This gender imbalance may give female leaders more confidence in leading a staff and involved parent community which is predominantly female, than male leaders, and make them more prepared to lead others by their personal example.

Traits of nurturing, caring, patience, and high energy levels have been the hallmarks of early childhood leaders in the past (Rodd, 1994). Does this mean that Tasmanian K-2 leaders in this study fall into this "mothering" role ascribed to early childhood leaders during the 1970's? Results of this study would indicate that this is not so, as female leaders believed that they were also more adept at involving the entire school community in decision making and problem solving practices, which are hallmarks of a quality educational provision for young children (Rodd, 1994). Furthermore, the self- perceptions of female leaders in this study indicated that they show higher levels of energy in their leadership, whilst displaying a greater capacity to overcome most challenges. By comparison, their male contemporaries rated themselves lower in these aspects of leadership.

Reasons for this elevated perception could be reflected in the fact that women leaders have been shown to have higher level skills in interpersonal relationships and communication (Hurty, 1995), where they engage in talking with others, not at them. Perhaps this would indicate that, through utilisation of higher-order communication

skills, the women leaders in this study were more in tune with their school communities and therefore, were more willing to take risks in trying to overcome challenges arising in their leadership. This would be based upon them believing that they have a strong understanding of the teachers' needs, founded on positive interpersonal relationships and respect.

Female leaders perceived that they demonstrated higher energy levels in their leadership, than was perceived by male leaders of themselves in this study. It is interesting to note that women have previously been reported (Shakeshaft, 1995) as being more capable at developing positive relationships as a central component during the day-to-day operation of the school. This approach requires leaders to be accessible and prepared to interact with school personnel on a daily basis, and not be categorised by some teachers, as in this study, as having leadership weaknesses in being office-bound, or computer-driven. Being available, relating to others, and being involved on a daily basis with school personnel is what this interactive style of leadership is about. This demands high energy levels of the leader. This daily interactive approach to leadership, attributed to women leaders in previous research (Hurty, 1995), could explain the link between the factors of energy and relationships, where female leaders in this study perceived themselves to have a more positive approach than male leaders perceived of themselves.

Further to this, female K-2 leaders perceived they possessed greater knowledge of early childhood pedagogical matters than did their male colleagues. This is to be expected given the gender imbalance in favour of females in the area of early childhood teaching specialisation, over the past twenty years. Few males have undertaken an early childhood specialisation (Potter, 1998) and indeed within this study no male leaders had an early childhood specialisation.

Impact of School Type

Consideration is now given to the perceptions of leaders in differing types of schools and to whether this variable has an impact on the quality of leadership which they believe is being provided for K-2 education. Two types of school were involved in this study, district high schools and primary schools. Comparative analyses indicated that two factors exhibited statistically significant differences between leaders' responses from primary schools and district high schools. These factors were respect and interpersonal skills (see Table 36). Leaders in primary schools indicated that they believed that they demonstrated greater respect and had higher levels of interpersonal skills with K-2 teachers, than did leaders in district high schools.

Respect is an important facet of leadership (Grady et al., 1994; Stoll & Fink, 1996; Bishop & Mulford, 1996). In this study, primary school leaders believed they were more sensitive to K-2 teachers' needs and, in return, had the ability to earn teachers' respect. One reason for this could be that primary schools generally function in a singular, cohesive manner, where leaders and teachers work together as a team in the school planning process. Success in collaborative endeavours is dependent upon consideration and respect of others and their opinions. This could indicate that the cooperative nature of leadership, currently being experienced in Tasmanian primary schools, demands that leaders are more respectful of all teachers. Conversely, district high schools generally function in a sub-school culture. This means that although teachers develop cooperative skills with others within their sub-school, school leaders are often not active participants in this process and therefore opportunities for mutual respect to be exercised between school leaders and K-2 teachers can be limited.

Furthermore, just as respect for K-2 teachers was seen to be highly important for primary school leaders, so were interpersonal skills. Effective conflict resolution skills, equity for all teachers and high level competence overall in interpersonal skills were components of the interpersonal factor. Once again, the importance of leaders spending time with teachers, developing positive interpersonal relationships, where each teacher is valued and their needs attended to, must not be underestimated.

Owing to the more collaborative team approach to leadership operating in many Tasmanian primary schools, leaders have had the opportunity of developing more rewarding and deeper relationships with teachers on their staff. Therefore, these primary leaders perceive that they are more successful with interpersonal skills than the district high school leaders. Likewise, effective conflict resolution is enhanced when leaders and teachers know each other and there is mutual respect between both parties. Leaders in district high schools need to actively engage in developing stronger interpersonal relationships with K-2 teachers, so that each teacher is shown respect and consideration in the day-to-day operation of the school. Confirmation that this is a problem area in some district high schools involved in this study, comes from comments made by K-2 teachers that the principal "needs to be seen more in K-2 and talk to teachers more" and "not be so involved in Grade 5-10 matters". The latter of these remarks indicates that this teacher believes that the principal is not interested in the K-2 area of the school. Perceptions such as these can only lead to ill feelings between leaders and K-2 teachers. Leaders in district high schools need to be visiting K-2 classrooms more, and be actively working to develop improved interpersonal skills with school personnel, so that each K-2 teacher and student feels respected and valued.

Impact of Specialisation

When comparing responses from leaders, based upon their specialisations, it was noted that the factor related to leaders' knowledge showed a statistically significant difference (see Table 37). When multiple comparisons were carried out to isolate specific differences, it was shown that leaders with an early childhood specialisation believed they had a greater level of personal knowledge regarding K-2 education, than did leaders with primary, secondary or physical education specialisations (see Table 39). This finding is to be expected, as K-2 leaders with early childhood training should perceive that they possess greater knowledge and have higher level skills related to K-2 pedagogy than those with other training.

Leaders have an important role in enhancing the provision of quality programs for K-2 education (Rodd, 1994; Jorde-Bloom, 1992). Thus, given the self-perceptions of K-2 leaders with specialisations in primary, secondary or physical education, it would appear that two paths are open to them if they are to enhance their leadership skills in relation to K-2 education. One option would be that these leaders delegate this pedagogical responsibility for leadership to other trusted staff, who have sound knowledge and expertise in early childhood education. However, if leaders select this course of action, their credibility in leading K-2 teachers in areas of pedagogical change may be compromised. The second path could be to personally engage in professional development, specifically related to K-2 education. However, this option has certain drawbacks. The first is the almost non-existent availability of professional development in early childhood pedagogy in Tasmania, with few opportunities for school personnel to engage in further studies in relation to K-2 education. Further, given the pressures being encountered by Tasmanian school leaders (especially principals) as they endeavour to cope with the continuing

influence of changes being placed upon them by the education department, the likelihood of them believing that they have the time to undertake further studies in K-2 education seems very limited.

Previously, there have been reports that school leaders have been reluctant to seek assistance in updating their skills in early childhood education for fear of damaging their reputation as competent school leaders (Stamopoulos, 1994). This would appear not to be the case in this study, with leaders openly acknowledging their deficits in early childhood technical knowledge. The next challenge is to provide opportunities for these perceived weaknesses to be addressed.

Results of multiple comparisons with respect to leaders' specialisations further revealed that leaders with early childhood training perceived that energy played a greater part in their leadership role than did their colleagues who had primary training (see Table 39). This perceived difference may result from the fact that the majority of the early childhood trained leaders would have early childhood classroom teaching experience (past or present) providing them with greater practical insight into early childhood teachers' needs and expectations, with regard to their leadership, than their primary trained colleagues. This knowledge may result in early childhood trained leaders being more attentive and energetic in their leadership and support of teachers in their care. By comparison, primary trained leaders may well be less knowledgeable concerning their K-2 staff's leadership (and support) needs for enhancement of their classroom practice, with the result that they do not perceive the need for such high levels of energy in their leadership role.

Gender distribution within the two groups may also explain the perceived difference concerning energy. The early childhood trained group consisted of 12 females whilst 12 males and 6 females comprised the primary trained group of

responding K-2 leaders. Consideration of the importance of energy in leadership showed significant differences between male and female leaders (see Table 36), with females attributing greater importance to this factor. Hence, the gender bias (towards females in early childhood trained leaders and males in primary trained leaders) also explains the perceived difference, concerning energy in leadership, between the two specialisations.

Impact of Position Classification and Level of Qualifications

When comparing leaders' responses, based upon their level of qualifications, no statistically significant differences were noted (see Table 40). Consideration of their responses, based on their position classification, showed significant differences in relation to the factor of leaders' knowledge (see Table 37). Subsequently, when multiple comparisons were carried out to highlight specific differences, it was revealed that responses from both AST 2s and assistant principals showed statistical difference to responses from principals (see Table 38).

AST 2s and APs rated leaders' knowledge as a more critical component of leadership than did principals. As discussed previously, leaders' knowledge is an important factor in the provision of quality leadership in K-2 education (Rodd, 1994; Stamopoulos, 1998). Reasons for the observed statistical differences may relate to the fact that principals, because of workload and general responsibility levels may tend to rely on other senior staff members to provide this supportive, informational role with K-2 teachers. Subsequently, this may have meant that principals have been left with the perception that they personally fail to demonstrate high levels of pedagogical knowledge in their leadership of the K-2 area of the school.

On the other hand, AST 2s and APs would generally be more involved with K-2 teachers on a daily basis than principals. Therefore, they would be more available to, and aware of the specific needs of, these teachers. Hence, they may well have a greater need for well-developed K-2 pedagogical knowledge and expertise than their principals. K-2 teachers need the support of strong, pedagogically well-informed leaders. It is apparent that many principals in the study failed to perceive that this pedagogical knowledge of K-2 was an important factor in their leadership of this area of education. Concern must be held for K-2 teachers who have no AST 2, 3 or AP on their staff and must rely upon their principal for pedagogical support, if the principal does not consider that provision of this type of support is important for effective leadership. Who will provide this vital, supportive, informational leadership role for these teachers?

Teachers' Perceptions

Statistical findings from the teachers' survey were considered, in relation to all seven factors identified by factor analysis (collaboration, interpersonal skills, accessibility, support, professional development, teachers' knowledge and performance). Significant differences in teachers' perceptions, when considering their principal's specialisation and most contacted leader's gender, specialisation and position classification, were found. No significant difference was revealed when the principal's gender was considered.

Impact of Principal's Specialisation

All of the seven factors, except accessibility, returned statistically significant differences, when the perceptions of teachers were considered in relation to the

teaching specialisation held by the principal (see Table 45). When multiple comparisons were used to isolate specific differences, it was shown that teachers believed that secondary trained principals displayed higher levels of expertise in these factors, than their primary trained colleagues (see Table 46).

Teachers with secondary trained principals believed that these principals were more collaborative, displayed greater skills in interpersonal relationships, were more supportive, provided greater levels of professional development, facilitated the enhancement of teachers' knowledge to a greater extent, and provided more recognition of high performance, than did teachers who had primary trained principals. A central reason for teachers rating secondary trained principals more highly may be that these principals are seen as being more willing to acknowledge that they have limited specific expertise in K-2 education. This may mean that these principals are more willing to listen to what teachers believe they require professionally, in relation to updating their personal knowledge in K-2 education through professional development opportunities. An approach such as this requires the principal to be collaborative towards K-2 teachers, and demands high level interpersonal skills set within a supportive school environment. Does this mean that primary trained principals are taking a more authoritarian role towards early childhood teachers? Does it mean they are less likely to listen to what K-2 teachers believe they need, both personally and professionally, because they think they are already aware of what K-2 teachers' needs are?

It would appear reasonable to expect that K-2 teachers with a principal who has an early childhood specialisation, would perceive their leader as being more skilled in the understanding of, and attending to, their professional needs. Therefore, it is of concern that these teachers in the study did not perceive that their principal had

greater expertise (on all seven factors) than those teachers with a secondary trained principal. Is this an indictment of the level of leadership expertise these leaders possess? Does it mean that early childhood trained principals have specific deficits in their leadership, not only in interpersonal skills, but also in relation to the utilisation of their pedagogical knowledge in leadership of K-2 education?

One reason for this perception could be that principals with an early childhood specialisation are, perhaps subconsciously, trying to enhance their credibility with primary teachers within their school. In doing this, these principals could be seen, by early childhood teachers, to be giving more attention to, and spending greater amounts of time, energy and maybe even resources on, primary teachers, to the detriment of early childhood teachers and students. A further reason could be that early childhood teachers take a more critical perspective of the leadership provided by early childhood trained principals. Teachers may well perceive that the principal already knows what is required in K-2 education, and therefore are highly critical of the leadership provided, particularly in respect of the provision of K-2 pedagogical assistance.

Impact of Most Contacted Leaders' Gender

All of the seven factors returned statistically significant differences, when the perceptions of teachers, with male and female most contacted leader, were compared (see Table 45). Female most contacted leaders were seen by teachers to be more collaborative, supportive and accessible than their male counterparts. They were also perceived as having better skills in interpersonal matters, professional development and attention to improving teachers' pedagogical knowledge. Finally, females were

seen to be performing better in performance related issues than males who were most contacted leaders.

These findings are supported by previous research, where female leaders have been reported to have better relationships with school personnel (Porter, 1995), to demonstrate higher levels of collaboration and support (Shakeshaft, 1995; Macbeath et al., 1996), and to nurture teachers' growth more (Hurty, 1995; Regan, 1995), than their male counterparts.

Specific comments from teachers who had a male most contacted leader support the survey findings and indicate that males had weaknesses in "interpersonal skills", "enthusiasm for children", and in "following through on ideas". Accessibility weaknesses were also noted by teachers, when considering their male most contacted leaders, with comments such as "overload (of work) at times", "often hard to find" and "needs to be seen in EC rooms". These responses indicate that there were also teachers believed that they had limited access to their male most contacted leader.

However, when considering the pedagogical aspects of leadership in early childhood education, there is one important issue which must not be overlooked in this gender-related discussion. The gender imbalance, in favour of females, in Tasmanian early childhood teachers and leaders over many years, is reflected in the fact that there was only one male most contacted leader with an early childhood specialisation. The remainder of most contacted male leaders had either a primary or physical education specialisation. This could explain why males were perceived by teachers to be less knowledgeable about K-2 pedagogical and performance issues. Support for this perspective is provided by teachers, as no responding teacher indicated their male leader demonstrated leadership strengths in knowledge of K-2

education. To further emphasise this, some teachers commented that their male most contacted leader had leadership weaknesses in "knowledge of K-2 teaching and learning", in "understanding the needs of young children" and in "valuing K-2 programs".

From this study, there is strong evidence to indicate that K-2 teachers perceive that their male most contacted leaders are failing to provide the level of leadership appropriate for students and teachers, across all aspects of early childhood education. This must raise questions about the capability of these male most contacted leaders in providing the decisive, meaningful leadership in K-2 education, which teachers expect and deserve.

Impact of Most Contacted Leaders' Specialisation

Only one of the seven factors, professional development, returned a statistically significant result, when the perceptions of teachers, in relation to the teaching specialisation of their most contacted leader were compared (see Table 49). It was shown that when teachers' perceptions were compared, teachers with a most contacted leader with a primary specialisation, believed that their leader was completing the professional development leadership role at a higher level than those teachers with a most contacted leader with an early childhood specialisation.

This is a somewhat baffling finding, and certainly does little to promote confidence in the ability of those most contacted leaders who are early childhood trained to competently attend to, and/or lead, the professional development of K-2 teachers. Once again, do K-2 teachers have an unrealistic view of the capability of their early childhood trained leaders to effectively cater for, and lead, their professional development? If teachers believe that their most contacted leaders with

an early childhood specialisation, are failing to attend to their professional needs, one has to ask what might be the reasons for this. It could be that these leaders are failing to listen to what their teachers believe they need, in relation to professional development. It could be that these leaders are failing to provide any leadership for teachers in this important aspect of teacher development. One reason for this could be that school leaders are so involved in undertaking, and completing, requirements demanded by the central education authority that there is no time left for assisting teachers to undertake specific professional development to meet their individual needs. As mentioned previously, the other issue in this consideration could be the near non-existent availability of professional development opportunities in K-2 education in Tasmania for those interested in updating their professional knowledge and expertise in early childhood education. This lack of provision results in strong negative implications for teachers and also for leaders. Opportunities for like-minded professional leaders to meet together to engage in professional development and dialogue, related to their area of leadership, is essential (Katz, 1995). Teachers perceive that there are problems with leadership of professional development, as provided by most contacted leaders who have a teaching specialisation in early childhood education.

Impact of Most Contacted Leaders' Classification

All of the seven factors, except support and performance, returned significant differences, when the perceptions of teachers, in relation to the level of responsibility held by their most contacted leader, were considered (see Table 47). Multiple comparisons, carried out to isolate the specific areas of difference, indicated that only three of the factors (collaboration, accessibility and professional development)

returned significant differences between the groups (see Table 48). No significant differences between specific groups were identified, in relation to the factors of teachers' knowledge and interpersonal skills.

Responding teachers within this study perceived that AST 2 leaders demonstrated lower levels of collaboration, within their K-2 leadership, than APs. The collaboration factor encompasses leadership skills of energy, purpose, problem solving, risk taking, shared decision-making, and consultation. This finding may well have been anticipated as it would be expected that APs, who hold a more senior leadership position than AST 2s, should possess better developed skills in these important facets of leadership. Four stages have been suggested in of early childhood leaders' development (Katz, 1995). According to these criteria, AST 2 leaders would be identified as operating at the lower levels of leadership development, compared to APs, who would normally have reached greater maturity in their leadership with their promotional progression.

Teachers also believed that APs demonstrated higher level skills in professional development, than did AST 2 leaders. Again, the most logical reason for this would be that APs, due to their higher promotional attainment, would have developed better skills in facilitating and/or leading professional development opportunities for K-2 teachers, than AST 2 leaders who have not reached the same promotion status. Another reason for this difference could be that the majority of AST 2 leaders have substantial teaching responsibilities within their leadership role, unlike most APs, who have few routine teaching responsibilities. A negative impact of this substantial teaching load for AST 2 leaders is the reduced time they have available to plan for, or lead, professional development for teachers within their leadership. This could leave K-2 teachers, who have an AST 2 leader, with the

perception that their leader fails to demonstrate high level skills in professional development. Furthermore, some teachers referred to this area as a leadership weakness of their AST 2 leader, making comments such as "needs higher level personal professional development in more up-to-date philosophies", and "needs knowledge of current curriculum as she often tells us to do things that we know are wrong". This is quite an area of concern, as these teachers believe that their leaders are in need of personal development in the K-2 curriculum. If this is the case, it is little wonder that some teachers believe that their AST 2 leaders can not provide appropriate professional development for them.

With AST 2 being the initial level of promotion for leaders, it is likely that some leaders within this study, would have been new to the position and could be described as novice (Vander Ven, 1991) leaders, in the survival stage (Katz, 1995) of leadership development. In fact, there were teachers who referred to these very issues as leadership weaknesses in their most contacted leader, with comments such as "first year of leadership area and learning leadership 'ropes'. With more experience I would expect/like more input in matters pertaining to classroom teaching/learning, innovation and research findings", and "many weaknesses in most areas as she is new to this role", and "needs more experience in leadership". All leaders being referred to were at the AST 2 level of promotion and were clearly perceived by teachers on their staff to be lacking in leadership skills.

The other area of difference was related to the accessibility factor. Teachers who referred to an AST 1 staff member for leadership believed that access to this person was limited, compared to those teachers who referred to an AP. This is totally understandable, as AST 1 staff members are specifically classroom teachers, who are sometimes given areas of specific leadership responsibility, such as

curriculum development or behaviour management. Therefore, teachers who refer to an AST 1 staff member for leadership would have to be prepared to acknowledge that access to this person will be limited, owing to the teaching responsibilities of the staff member.

It is apparent from the survey's findings, and highlighted in the discussion, that there are some leadership areas, which teachers participating in this study saw as weaknesses in their K-2 leader. In relation to leaders' level of leadership responsibility, teachers who had AST 2 leaders believed that they had lower level skills in collaboration and professional development than teachers who referred to an AP for leadership in K-2.

What Perceived Impact Does the Teacher's School Type, Specialisation and Level of Qualifications Have on the Way Teachers View the Leadership Role in K-2 Education?

This sub-question of the study is designed to investigate the impact that teachers' demographic groupings have on the way they view the leadership role in K-2 education. Differences in teachers' perceptions, based upon teachers' school type, specialisation, and level of qualifications, were considered for each of the factors, obtained from the factor analysis undertaken in relation to the teachers' 56 survey items. Of the seven factors, obtained through this analysis, teachers' responses in respect to collaboration, interpersonal skills, accessibility, support, professional development, teachers' knowledge, and performance all returned significant differences when considering one or more of the teachers' demographic groupings named above (see Tables 42 and 44).

Impact of School Type

One factor, accessibility, returned a statistically significant difference when the responses of teachers, from primary and district high schools, were analysed. Teachers in primary schools believed that they had greater levels of accessibility to their K-2 leader, than teachers in district high schools (see Table 44).

As discussed earlier, accessibility is an important issue in leadership (Hill, 1994; Rodd, 1994). Teachers, expect, and require, the positive leadership of a senior staff member, who is available when needed and who makes available the necessary time to interact with teachers, and respond to their needs and concerns. As one teacher in a district high school, in this study, commented "the leader MUST maintain a strong physical presence in all parts of the school".

Teachers in district high schools believed that their K-2 leader was less accessible, than their peers in primary schools. The reasons for this perception difference between teachers in the two school types would be similar to those propounded for the differences in leaders' perceptions. It could be proposed that the reason for this difference may result from the fact that district high schools tend to operate on a sub-school culture. In this mode of school organisation, teachers work together in class groupings and develop strong relationships with fellow teachers, often with little direct contact being made with school leaders and teachers from other sub-school groupings. One district high school teacher, when considering the primary tasks undertaken by the principal in K-2 education commented "being in a district high, a lot of our senior students take up an enormous amount of time. I feel that this is a contributing factor to the low profile/lack of appearance (of our principal) in the K-2 area". Ultimately, this may cause these teachers to perceive that they have fewer opportunities to access their principal. However, of greater concern

would be that these teachers believe their principals fail to care about what they are doing.

The other reason for these differing perceptions could be that, frequently, K-2 classrooms, within district high schools, are physically isolated from where senior staff have their offices. This physical distance between teachers and senior staff can mean that teachers may not see a member of senior staff in their classrooms for many days, if not weeks. As four district high school teachers commented, their principal needed to be "seen in K-2 classrooms more", "more accessible/available at certain times", "accessibility is limited" and she has "a low profile in infant/primary area". All these comments indicate that teachers in these district high schools had problems with the amount of interest and leadership presence their principal was demonstrating within their K-2 classrooms.

Furthermore, when the responses of teachers from district high schools were investigated, it was noted that, when asked what primary tasks the principal undertakes in relation to education in K-2, 50% responded with "none" or "nil" or "little". This is indeed a concerning factor as, in the eyes of these teachers, the principals do not have any leadership tasks related to K-2. The concern relates to a lack of real understanding of the nature of leadership by these teachers, which results in turn from poor 'information giving' by the principals. It is accepted that leaders are busy people, but nevertheless being easily accessible to all teachers on the teaching team is essential, and it is an important aspect in providing an equitable approach to leadership for all teachers on the staff.

Impact of Specialisation and Level of Qualifications

When comparing the teachers' responses, based upon their specialisation, no statistically significant differences were noted. Consideration of their responses based on their level of qualifications, showed significant differences in six of the seven factors, with the factor of teachers' knowledge being marginally outside the specification for significance in this study (see Table 42). Subsequently, when multiple comparisons were used to isolate specific differences between differing levels of teachers' qualifications, only three factors showed significance, these being collaboration, interpersonal skills, and accessibility (see Table 43). The factors of support, professional development, and performance all failed to show specific differences between groups, although they showed significant findings overall. However, it was noted that results between the groups of teachers with a B Ed and TTC, and teachers with a TTC, were marginally outside the specified level of significance in respect to two other factors, professional development and performance.

Teachers with a B Ed and TTC were more dissatisfied with the level of collaboration being provided by their school leaders, compared to those teachers with TTC or Other Degree qualifications. As collaboration is generally expected in school operation today (Hallinger & Hausman, 1994; Goldring & Sullivan, 1993), it prompts questions as to whether teachers with lesser qualifications are recognising collaboration as a significant component of school leadership. Or are they, as was the case two decades or so ago, seeing leadership as authoritarian and the sole responsibility of the principal, leading them to take a fairly ambivalent approach towards the importance of collaborative leadership, within their schools?

B Ed and TTC qualified teachers were also more dissatisfied with their leader's interpersonal skills and level of accessibility, than those teachers with a TTC qualification. This would appear to indicate that teachers with higher level of qualifications were more discerning in what they expected of their leaders (and perceived them to be achieving) within the leadership role in K-2 education. It would seem that teachers with higher levels of qualifications were not content to accept the present quality of leadership being provided within their schools, but were prepared to analyse and comment in a more critical nature than lower qualified teachers. This should be expected. If teachers, who have undertaken further studies, are not more able to question and reflect on educational issues, then their training has been to little avail.

A further consideration could be that teachers with a B Ed and TTC would usually be more recently trained teachers, as the opportunity to gain a B Ed degree has only been available to Tasmanian teachers for approximately the last twenty years. This would mean that teachers with a B Ed and TTC qualification would be likely to be younger than teachers with only a TTC qualification. Taking this further, it would appear that teachers who have qualified more recently, and with higher qualifications, are more discerning regarding the leadership provided for K-2 education in their schools, especially in their expectations concerning collaboration, interpersonal skills and accessibility.

In relation to interpersonal skills, do older, but less qualified, teachers have an increased understanding of interpersonal skills, when compared to their more highly qualified, but predominantly younger peers? This could result from their years of teaching experience, involving interaction with K-2 leaders. If this is so, it could explain why these teachers are more satisfied with the leader's interpersonal skills,

than those teachers who have a B Ed and TTC. Another explanation could be that, interpersonal skills have been increasingly seen as the cornerstone of successful leadership (Rodd, 1994; Grady et al., 1994). This would explain why the more highly qualified teachers, as part of their later training, have come to understand that the leader's expertise in interpersonal skills as crucial to the leadership in K-2 education.

Considering the factor of accessibility further, does this mean that older, less qualified teachers expect less access to their K-2 leaders? Their experience may give them insight into their leaders' workload challenges and availability, and, as they are prepared to teach in a more isolated manner, they rely on their own experience and knowledge to guide them through difficult challenges? Conversely, younger teachers may be seeking access to their leader more, for support and guidance through their beginning years of teaching, only to find their leader is too busy with other matters. If this is the case, K-2 leaders need to engage in some extensive prioritising processes. Equitable access to the principal, and members of senior staff, is an integral component of the each leader's daily practice. Teachers must be comfortable knowing that their leader is available on a daily basis and willing to share the positive and negative challenges faced by each teacher on the staff.

What Perceived Impact Does the Lack of Early Childhood Training Have on How Leaders Fulfil Their Leadership Role in K-2 Education?

This sub-question of the study was designed to investigate teachers' and leaders' perceptions of whether a lack of training in early childhood education limits the leaders' effectiveness in K-2 leadership. When comparative analysis was carried out, there were no statistically significant differences, in respect to leaders' and teachers' responses when answering 'Yes' or 'No' to the posed question (see Tables

36 and 44). However, two factors (energy and leader's knowledge) were just marginally outside the defined limit, when leaders' responses were considered.

Leaders, who responded 'Yes', considered the factors of energy and leader's knowledge to be of greater importance, than those leaders who responded 'No'. Reasons why energy was perceived as more important may be that if leaders are to provide equitable leadership throughout the entire school, K-6, they need to demonstrate high levels of motivation and enthusiasm in leadership. There was obviously a group of leaders who understood the demands of this role, and that this required high energy levels, as they actively participated in the day to day life of the school. In respect to the factor of leader's knowledge, a significant group of leaders believed that this was a component of successful leadership. Perhaps, they were leaders who had experienced feelings of inadequacy, in relation to being knowledgeable about what happens in K-2 education. Maybe, they were leaders with an Early childhood specialisation, who believed that it is essential for leaders to have a strong knowledge and understanding of K-2 pedagogy to allow them to take a credible leadership role in the K-2 area of the school.

Considering leaders' and teachers' responses to the open-ended section of the question reveal some congruence in opinions. From both groups, 40% of responses referred to the need for leaders to have specific knowledge of K-2 education (see Figures 15 and 24). However, a key differences between leaders' and teachers' responses related to the fact that 16% of teachers' responses indicated that leaders needed to have, or have had, experience in K-2 classrooms and teaching. This is an understandable responses as there could be teachers in this study, who have sought assistance from their leader, regarding teaching and learning issues pertaining to early childhood education, only to receive no support, or information, which these

teachers know is inappropriate for K-2 students. If leaders are to be seen as providing positive leadership, appropriate experience and skills in classroom teaching could justly be argued as being essential leadership skills. As one teacher commented, "leaders need to know the stress of teaching young children".

Teachers need to see their K-2 leader as a credible role model in early childhood education. In this study, differences were shown in leaders' and teachers' responses, in relation to credibility in leadership, with 10% of leaders' responses and 4% of teachers' responses referring to this issue. Once again, it would be anticipated that leaders would place greater emphasis on credibility in their leadership, than teachers. Part of the issue of credibility in leadership could be seen as the leader possessing sound knowledge of, and teaching skills in, K-2 education. As one teacher observed, "leaders can only be seen as credible if they make informed and equitable decisions for K-2 teachers and children", but this requires specific knowledge of early childhood education. Further teachers' comments were, leaders "need to know that K-2 children need to be handled differently to 3-6 children" and "my experience of inappropriate programs and unrealistic expectations by leaders, show that the leader must have a sound knowledge of K-2 education".

Some leaders had similar comments on this issue of credibility and these include, "the credibility of the leader is in doubt if not K-2 trained", and "the depth of knowledge in some K-2 leaders is a real concern". There is considerable agreement in leaders' and teachers' comments, with 50% of leaders' responses affirming of the need for K-2 training for early childhood leaders. In a like manner, 60% of teachers' responses were supportive of this same question.

However, if leaders do not have an early childhood specialisation what do they do? As one leader stated, "K-2 leaders must be learners", but this requires specific

training in K-2 pedagogy. However, the lack of professional development opportunities for leaders in Tasmania, as discussed earlier, places the reality of this occurring in considerable doubt. Furthermore, as another teacher pointed out "no ongoing training for early childhood leaders can only lead to poor decisions for teachers and students". This is clearly a valid statement and with the many educational changes occurring across the entire school sector, the likelihood of inappropriate practices being applied to teaching young children is a real concern. Young children can not activate for what is educationally appropriate for them, K-2 educators must do this (Rodd, 1994). K-2 leaders must be advocates for the young child., but this requires sound knowledge and understanding of K-2 pedagogy to allow appropriate leadership decisions to be made. The sentiments of seven teachers responses, regarding this, are captured in these two statements by teachers, "leaders need to know the K-2 stages of development", as "K-2 children need to be handled differently to 3-6 children". Two leaders supported this view and stated that "ECE differs from Primary education, especially behaviour management" and K-2 leaders with no early childhood training "fail to be effective in their leadership".

The question that must be addressed is, if K-2 leaders do not have the expertise in early childhood pedagogy, who can be the caretakers of young children receiving the appropriate educational provision? As more political power is brought to bear on education, K-2 teachers and leaders must stand firm on what is appropriate for Early childhood children, but to do this leaders need to have at least a fundamental knowledge of early childhood pedagogy.

Leaders and teachers, who answered the question of whether a lack of training in early childhood education limits K-2 leaders' effectiveness in the negative, presented four key reasons for their responses. These were the ongoing nature of

leaders' learning, the notion of shared leadership, the basic nature of educational knowledge, and the generic skills of leadership.

Leaders' responses (14%) referred to the need for leaders to be committed to ongoing learning, whilst 10% of teachers' responses referred to this similar aspect. Two teachers indicated that although they didn't believe it was important for K-2 leaders to be trained in early childhood education, these leaders needed to be constantly developing their knowledge in the area. They stated "it is essential that early childhood leaders trust others' opinions and learn from them" and the leader "needs an ability to learn from others". Leaders, on the other hand, referred to the fact that leaders are constantly engaging in professional development as part of their leadership role. However, it could be argued that this is generally not in relation to early childhood curriculum issues, and therefore leaders may be personally gaining very little via this process, towards enhancing their skills in leadership of K-2 pedagogical initiatives. K-2 leaders need to be committed to enhancing their personal knowledge through professional reading and discussion with leaders, who have similar substantive leadership positions. In this way, the impact of the lack of formal training in early childhood education, could be partly negated. The reality is, however, that given the pressures of school-based changes currently being experienced within Tasmanian schools, K-2 leaders may find it extremely hard to find the time, or have the inclination, to engage in further study outside fulfilling the demands laid down by the education department at this time.

The second reason, provided by teachers and leaders, as to why the lack of training does not limit the effectiveness of K-2 leaders, was the issue of shared leadership, with 5% of teachers' and 8% of leaders' responses related to this issue. Shared leadership is a component of school leadership today where teachers are

encouraged to feel and act like leaders in the school (Blase & Blase, 1997; Rodd, 1994). Teachers' and leaders' responses, referred to this aspect and as two leaders commented "it allows the opportunity for others to lead", and further it provides "a team approach to early childhood leadership".

Nevertheless, questions have to be asked about the level of expertise being provided in this form of leadership. What happens in schools, especially smaller ones, which do not have the depth of expertise in early childhood teacher? Does this mean that enhancement of K-2 teaching and learning goes untouched? Shared leadership in this context would likely mean the perpetuation of outmoded practices in early childhood education. Shared leadership is an excellent process, but there has to be the expertise within the staff team to meet the needs of teachers. Expertise from other sources could always be sought, but financially this is not always possible, given the tight budgetary constraints in schools. It also fails to acknowledge the isolated nature of many schools in Tasmania, making contact with other professionals difficult. Perhaps, the answer to this dilemma is through technological provisions, where K-2 teachers could engage through distance mode, in further pedagogical training in K-2 education, or simply interacting with other leaders to discuss similar issues.

Leaders' (8%) and teachers' (6%) responses, indicated that although K-2 leaders did not require early childhood training, it was essential for them to have a sound basic knowledge of child development. Comments from leaders on this issue included, that no training in early childhood education is appropriate but "teacher training must be placed in context of children's total education", and "knowledge of K-2 pedagogies is a **must**". Teachers' responses were similar in nature and included, leaders "need to know that K-2 children are different to 3-6 children" and they must

"know where early childhood education fits in the overall development of children". However, the reality is that not every leader has this basic knowledge of child development.

More recently trained leaders could generally be assumed to have this knowledge, but what about leaders who trained over two decades ago? Only recently, have the implications of psychologists' work (Vygotsky 1978) been explored by researchers such as Dockett & Fleer (1999). Indeed, from the writer's experience, many K-2 teachers and leaders have little knowledge of the important impact these new perspectives can have on the quality of the educational provision in K-2 education. Once again, the issue of continued, ongoing learning for the K-2 leader is of great importance, because what was appropriate for young children twenty years ago, is not necessarily appropriate for education in the new millenium.

The fourth reason, proposed by teachers and leaders, for EC leaders not requiring specific ECE training relates to the generic nature of leadership skills, and 20% of leaders' responses and 19% of teachers' responses referred to this issue. "Leadership is enabling others to perform to their full potential", commented one leader in this study. Another leader stated "it is more to do with a leader's personality and valuing K-2 teachers". Many teachers agreed with this suggestion and supported it with statements that leadership in K-2 is about "being able to relate to children", being "adaptable" and "sensitive", with "an interest in the area". However, a group of teachers clearly indicated that, although leadership skills are generic, K-2 leaders "**must not** be secondary trained". This is an interesting comment, which clearly reflects the perception, of some K-2 teachers, that problems arise when secondary trained leaders are assigned to ECE leadership. This indicates that, according to these teachers, although many leadership skills are generic in

nature, specific K-2 knowledge is an essential component in successful EC leadership. In reality, many K-2 teachers in Tasmanian schools are being led by secondary trained leaders, and the appropriateness of this fact should be questioned. This suggestion that K-2 leaders should have specific EC education knowledge is supported by previous research (Rodd, 1994) which showed that leaders should provide leadership in K-2 pedagogical matters. The quality of this provision from secondary trained leaders must, at least, be questionable, unless they have a sound knowledge of child development from a very early age and also have K-2 classroom experience.

Another issue, related to core leadership skills, concerns the development of these generic skills in K-2 leaders. At present in Tasmanian schools', middle managers have limited opportunities for professional development, such as involvement in seminars and workshops, in these basic 'building blocks' of leadership. The 'Principals for the Future' program is currently starting to address these aspects of leadership. Perhaps a more appropriate program would cater to 'Leaders for the Future', meeting the needs of *all* educational leaders in terms of developing expertise in the key skills, which are generic to all levels of educational leadership. At present, this skill development at all 'non-principal' levels is generally undertaken on the job and occurs by osmosis (diffusion of skills from other leaders in the school team) or trial and error.

It has been stated previously that Tasmanian principals are soon to become accountable for the facilitation, and documentation, of each of their teachers' and leaders' personal professional growth. To satisfy this accountability, access to reliable means of development will need to be sought. What support structures will be put in place by the education department, and will these fulfil the professional

needs of individual leaders? It appears that this will be an extensive task and reliable, quality providers of professional development programs will need to be readily accessible to satisfy requirements. Who will be prepared to take on the challenge of providing these programs? Options include the universities, education department internal training groups and external providers, many of whom may not possess an understanding of the particular nuances of educational leadership. For the sake of tomorrow's students and teachers, quality leadership is more likely to be provided if the understanding of educational leadership in embraced within the development provision.

What are the overall perceptions of leaders and teachers, as to whether the lack of ECE training limits the effectiveness of K-2 leaders? In this study, 60% of teachers and 50% of leaders believed that lack of such training has a negative impact upon the leadership provided. Analysing the reasons for their 'Yes' response, 40% of both teachers and leaders believed that K-2 leaders need to have specific knowledge of K-2 curriculum and pedagogy. By comparison, 40% of teachers and 50% of leaders, disagreed that leaders needed an early childhood specialisation. They cited reasons which included the generic nature of leadership, the basic knowledge all leaders have of child development, the fact that leaders engage in ongoing learning, and that shared leadership aids K-2 leaders, in attending to K-2 teachers' professional needs.

It appears that teachers generally perceive that leaders require an early childhood specialisation, although leaders appear to be equally divided on the issue. However, the statistically significant difference in leaders' responses to the option of 'Yes' or 'No', regarding the factor of leaders' knowledge would indicate that this issue is of considerable concern for some K-2 leaders. Many leaders may remember

negative experiences they had had within their K-2 leadership, owing to their lack of early childhood pedagogical knowledge. The challenge is attending to this perceived need, thus enabling K-2 leaders to be more effective and confident in their leadership role.

What Are the Greatest Challenges for K-2 Education Today, as Perceived by School Leaders and Teachers?

This sub-question of the study was designed to ascertain what K-2 leaders and teachers perceived to be the key challenges facing early childhood education today. Similarities and differences were identified in the responses from the two groups (see Table 30). School leaders perceived that change, particularly associated with educational and organisational aspects, involving time and school requirements, provided the major challenges for K-2 leaders. On the other hand, teachers believed that organisational imperatives involved with time, change-related matters, and knowledge issues (particularly leaders' knowledge), were the three major challenges.

Currently, school leaders are constantly facing change (Fullan 1991) and, within this study, educational change was seen as the greatest challenge for leaders involved in K-2 education. In 25% of their responses, leaders referred to the overcrowded curriculum and the impact which this is having upon education in K-2. This level of concern merits further consideration. Over the past three to five years, many departmental directives have impacted dramatically on the educational provision in the Early Childhood area. Specification of the lengths of time which must be dedicated to mathematics and literacy teaching and learning each day, as well as the need to provide daily exposure to special programs including Flying Start, has left leaders and teachers with the dilemma of how to provide a balanced K-2

curriculum for children. Given that many schools have specialist time allocated for each K-2 class in music and physical education, consideration needs to be given to the question of how the other key learning areas can be integrated into the learning program.

What should leaders advise teachers to do? Is it acceptable to only teach units of science, technology, studies of society and the environment, health, and the arts (other than music) once or twice a year? If this is the case it cannot be seen as a balanced curriculum for young students. Do leaders and teachers ignore the departmental stipulation regarding the minimum stipulated teaching time for specific subjects, or do they ensure that it occurs, to the detriment of delivery of a balanced curriculum? For too long, K-2 leaders have failed to address these questions, by being proactive and seeking clarification and clear answers from departmental officers.

The most important challenge, according to teachers' perceptions, was an organisational matter related to time availability and its management. Teachers expressed concern that their K-2 leaders were failing to fully attend to their leadership responsibilities due to time constraints associated with having heavy, often full time, teaching loads. Many AST 2s and AST 3s fall into this category. Teachers felt that, to be effective, their leaders needed to have time to visit classrooms, talk with teachers and parents, and have time to fulfil specific leadership roles. If teachers believe that their leader, and especially their most contacted leader, does not have time to spend supporting them, questions about the quality of leadership must be expected.

Responding leaders were also concerned about this issue (see Table 30). As one leader commented, "as teaching load increases, leadership decreases". What a

revealing comment! Another leader suggested that educational leadership is about "time management and working smarter, not harder". However, if the time for leadership is diminished or simply not available, it is extremely difficult, or impossible, to "work smarter" on leadership tasks. The result of these increasing pressures must only lead to stress amongst K-2 leaders, and consequently amongst teachers, as their leadership support is found wanting. Leadership is a people-intensive task (Lashway et al., 1996) and it therefore requires the availability of quality time to interact with, and provide support for, teaching members of the staff team. If leaders do not have this time available, the quality of their leadership must necessarily be compromised. Responses indicate that there are teachers who believe that their leader is too busy or too stressed to deal with extra tasks, and therefore would try to solve challenges themselves. There are other teachers, who feel unsupported when seeking assistance from their leader who, feeling overwhelmed by the combined pressures of teaching and leadership with insufficient time resources, deal with requests abruptly or ineffectively.

The importance of the challenge of 'finding' sufficient time for leaders (especially most contacted leaders) to provide effective leadership, is highlighted by the fact that it was emphasised by both leaders and teachers involved in the study. One obvious, but cost increasing, means of achieving this objective would be to reduce the teaching load of leaders, thereby freeing time for provision of more effective leadership and support for teachers in their staff.

Another organisational challenge highlighted by K-2 leaders related to the need to meet the requirements of diverse school operational needs. They referred to the pressures of balancing administrative and academic needs in their leadership, as well as ensuring an equitable educational provision for all K-2 students and teachers.

Comments from leaders, associated with this challenge, included "how to balance work and reduce stress", "as class sizes increase, K-2 leaders need to be more available for teachers, not less as it is at present", and "how to balance personal PD for teachers and school-based PD". These are complex challenges, which illustrate the professional dilemmas faced by K-2 leaders in schools today.

The next most important challenge, highlighted by K-2 teachers, related to their leaders' knowledge of Early Childhood curriculum and pedagogy. Teachers believed that leaders needed to develop a deeper understanding of the needs of K-2 children, and what happens in their classrooms. Once again, doubts were expressed about the ability of some K-2 leaders to effectively provide leadership for K-2 teachers in pedagogical matters. Reasons for this lack of knowledge may be related to the time constraints raised previously. One teacher's comment, "K-2 **is** different to the other grades (3-6)", highlights why many of them believe that this specific knowledge is vital to being able to provide effective K-2 leadership.

K-2 leaders must be able to be advocates for young children, and their needs, both at the school level and in the wider community. Within the school's operation, this advocacy, amongst other things, would be to ensure equity in the provision of resources to the various levels of education. Also of importance is raising the profile of Early Childhood education, from the commonly held belief that young children "only play", to the positive view, expressed by one teacher in the study, that "ECE is demanding and worthwhile". However, the likelihood of this occurring is reduced if leaders do not have a sound knowledge and understanding of early childhood pedagogy, and the developmental needs of K-2 children. In relating to a wider audience, K-2 leaders have a central responsibility in promoting the provision of appropriate learning programs for children and challenging what is perceived to be

detrimental to children's education. One teacher in the study contended that the leader's role is to "challenge politicians' ramblings" with rhetoric founded upon sound educational theory and practice. Has a lack of educational expertise amongst K-2 leaders meant that the effectiveness of young children's most potent advocates, within the school and community arenas, been diminished? New initiatives are impacting increasingly upon the teaching, and subsequent learning, of children. Is the appropriateness of new developments being overseen, at district level, by leaders with limited K-2 pedagogical expertise? Likewise, do these leaders believe that they know 'what is right' but, when challenged, display shortcomings in their understanding of young children's educational needs? These questions demand attention and consideration, since the very future of young learners may well be at stake.

The other key challenge, referred to in 10.2% of teachers' responses, related to the nature of relationships between leaders and teachers. By comparison, only 5.8% of leaders' responses were concerned with this aspect of leadership. Teachers believed that accessibility to, and support from, leaders were important issues in their leadership. A number of teachers referred to a lack of support being provided for their 'stressed' colleagues by K-2 leaders. Factors, cited as contributing to increased stress levels amongst teachers, included increasing class sizes, inclusion of special needs children into 'mainstream' classes, and the ongoing pressure of coping with the number of young children affected by considerable emotional and behavioural problems. Teachers who referred to these factors obviously believe that their leaders should be providing support in, and assistance with, these educational challenges. A major reason for the lack of provision of support by leaders may relate, once again, to not having sufficient time available to assist teachers. Also, it may well be that

many leaders are fully extended in dealing with their own stress levels, having insufficient energy to provide the support required by the teachers. A lack of support could also result from leaders' lack of knowledge of the very areas in which teachers are struggling, such as inclusion and behaviour management. If leaders have little to contribute, in the form of new, innovative, knowledge-based ideas to assist teachers, how can they be considered to be providing effective leadership? Is this concern by teachers another indication that some K-2 leaders have shortcomings in their leadership and early childhood knowledge?

Some responding teachers expressed concerns about how available their leaders were, believing that contact should occur on a daily basis. The possibility of this degree of interaction between teachers and leaders is obviously seriously restricted if the leaders have significant teaching loads and classroom responsibilities. This particular situation places the teacher/leader in a dilemma, fraught with decisions. These decisions involve searching for a balance between students in their classes, who deserve quality teaching and full-time attention, and the staff under their guidance, who need their support and assistance. The result of this dilemma is that there are generally losers. The students' education may suffer if too much time and emphasis is placed on leadership. Both groups will suffer if the leader vacillates between the two areas of responsibility, spreading their available time and energy too thinly to effectively satisfy the needs of either group. The teachers' support and leadership will suffer if too much time is spent on attending to the classroom responsibilities and educational needs of the students. It is this third scenario which many teachers believe occurs, with the accompanying concerns about lack of availability for support and assistance being those which have been expressed

in the study. Leaders also recognise this as a problem situation, resulting in feelings of guilt or inadequacy about their leadership.

What Similarities and Differences are Evident Between School Leaders' and Teachers' Perceptions of the K-2 Leadership Role?

This sub-question of the study is addressed by utilising the results obtained from comparative analyses of leaders' and teachers' perceptions of the nature of the leadership role in K-2 education. Discussion will focus on the comparison of leaders' and teachers' demographic data, and their perceptions in relation to the most important leadership factors, the most influential leadership sources, the principal's role, and perceptions of strengths and weaknesses within that role.

Comparison of Leaders' and Teachers' Demographic Data

Results indicate that the leaders in this study were more highly qualified than teachers (see Table 25). Two degrees were held by 39% of leaders compared to only 2% of teachers. This is understandable, given that leaders would generally have greater opportunity to engage in further study and would probably perceive that they needed to continue to update their qualifications if they wished to progress along the leadership career path. However, it is of concern that only 2% of teachers had two degrees. Does this mean that teachers are not encouraged to continue with their professional studies? Does it mean that further studies are not perceived as necessary and advantageous within a teaching career?

An interesting finding from the study is that more teachers than leaders are undertaking further studies in shorter courses, resulting in receipt of certificates and diplomas. Does this mean that these courses are seen as being more pertinent, in that

they deal with enhancing teachers' skills in specific areas which teachers identify as being of interest or high need within their teaching? It may also be the case that teachers are more prepared to take on courses which demand a lesser time commitment. Does this mean that degree courses need to be tailored towards the individual needs of teachers and be more aware of teachers' time constraints? Clearly, it is an area that deserves further investigation.

When demograhic data, related to leaders' and teachers' specialisations, were reviewed, two major differences were apparent. In this study, 73% of teachers were early childhood specialists, compared with 38% of leaders (see Table 25). This is not surprising, since there would be a greater expectation that practising classroom teachers would have technical expertise in their teaching field than leaders, who are drawn from all areas of teaching to the leadership positions. Nevertheless, research (Rodd, 1994; Leithwood, Begley, et al., 1994) indicates that leaders need to have a sound pedagogical knowledge of the technical core of education, related to their field of leadership. The level of expertise must be seriously in question when the K-2 leadership of leaders within this study is considered. Questions have to be asked about the 62% of leaders, who do not have a specialisation in early childhood education, especially related to issues of credibility in instructional matters. A peripheral concern, highlighted by the demographic data from the study, is that 27% of early childhood practitioners do not have early childhood specialist training. Teaming these teachers with leaders without early childhood expertise poses serious questions about the quality of learning provided for children in their care. Who do these teachers turn to if they have instructional problems? What does this mean for our students in K-2 education? Will this trend of appointing leaders and teachers who have no specialisation in early childhood education persist?

Responses received from primary and district high schools were similar from both teachers and leaders. However, major differences were evident in relation to gender, between male (43%) and female (57%) leaders, and male (1%) and female (99%) teachers (see Table 25). Given that gender plays a significant role in the nature of the leadership provided (Hurty, 1995; Porter, 1995; Rodd, 1994), this finding requires further thought and investigation. The fact that only one male teacher responded to this study is indicative of the dearth of male teachers within the early childhood sector of education in Tasmanian schools. In 1998 there were only 17 such teachers in this state (Potter, 1998). This is a real concern for education in Tasmania, although the gender balance between the leaders involved in this study is relatively even, which is encouraging.

Comparison of Perceptions of the Important Leadership Factors

Considerable congruence was apparent between teachers' and leaders' perceptions of the most important factors related to K-2 leadership. Both groups indicated that demonstration of trust and support for teachers was the most important leadership factor (see Table 26). Likewise, both leaders (54%) and teachers (67%) perceived that ensuring adequate provision of resources for K-2 education was important, as was helping to improve teaching practice (leaders, 65% and teachers, 50%). This is heartening to the extent that both leaders and teachers perceived that these three factors are important in K-2 education. This underscores the importance that both groups give to being able to effectively work together. As well, it is a recognition by both groups that a certain level of resources is deemed to be necessary for the effective provision of public education.

However, there are some key differences as well. Leaders (60%) placed more than twice as much importance on sharing leadership with others, than did teachers (27%),as shown in Figure 25. Does this mean that teachers are finding the task of full-time teaching demanding enough without having to engage in leadership tasks within the school? Perhaps leaders are placing too much pressure on teachers to be part of the leadership team. Leaders are strongly supporting shared leadership, but do teachers have the time or energy to engage in this task? Some leaders may be failing to provide adequate leadership in K-2 education, by trying to be seen to be sharing the leadership with others. This is certainly an aspect worth further consideration.

Another leadership factor which was perceived with differing levels of importance by teachers and leaders was "promotes commitment to school goals and processes" (leaders 38% and teachers 18%). This result is quite expected, since leaders need to be committed to the overall development of school goals and processes. It must be part of their everyday leadership. On the other hand, the difference in leaders' (10%) and teachers' (29%) perceptions, related to possession of sound conflict and negotiation skills, is surprising. It could be expected that leaders would perceive personal expertise in conflict resolution to be of prime importance within their daily leadership. However, this is not so, with teachers believing this factor to be more important than leaders. Could this indicate that, with the increasing incidence of inappropriate behaviour by students within the schools, teachers are seeking greater levels of support from school leaders? Do they perceive that leaders are failing to address this important issue because they do not have the adequate skills to do so? This may also be the case with regard to some teachers, as

there were references made to leaders needing to be more assertive with some staff members.

When the mean scores of each leadership factor were investigated it was revealed that leaders (2.6) also considered "helps to improve teaching practice" to be of greater importance than teachers (1.4). This response is also to be expected as leaders would perceive their leadership role to encompass the need to enhance teaching practice throughout the school. On the other hand, it could suggest that teachers were relatively happy with the level of support they were receiving in this regard, and therefore did not see it as such a high priority as leaders.

In conclusion, it can be seen that there was congruence in the perceptions of teachers and leaders regarding the need for trust and support for teachers and the need to ensure adequate resourcing for K-2. There were, however, differences in the importance placed upon aspects of shared leadership, the possession of conflict resolution skills by the leader, the ability to help improve teaching practice, and the promotion of commitment to school goals and processes.

Comparison of Perceptions of Most Influential Leadership Sources for K-2 Education

Teams of K-2 teachers were the most frequently named source of leadership by teachers (71%) and leaders (97%), as shown in Table 27. However, it should be noted that the difference in opinions between the groups, could be indicative of the indifference some teachers showed to the importance of shared leadership as a leadership factor, discussed in the previous section. It could be said that leaders are almost totally committed to shared leadership. However, there would appear to be a group of teachers who are not as committed to shared leadership practices, and

therefore rated this aspect as less important within their responses. Does this mean teachers believe that there is too much shared leadership in K-2 education? Are there a group of teachers who are seeking more direct forms of leadership than presently being provided within their school?

The other key difference, between leaders' and teachers' responses, related to the reliance placed on individual classroom teachers for leadership (see Figure 26). Teachers (67%) placed far greater credence on the impact fellow teachers had on the leadership provision in K-2 education, than did leaders (47%). This would seem to indicate that leaders are unaware of how often teachers are referring to other classroom teachers for guidance and support? The question must be asked as to whether leaders are so involved in day-to-day administrative and managerial tasks that they are unaware of the needs of their K-2 teachers. There are also many K-2 leaders who have substantial teaching loads, thus making their leadership role a time-balancing exercise at best. Questions must be asked about the quality of leadership being provided by these other classroom teachers. Are young, inexperienced teachers receiving inappropriate advice from other teachers? As long as K-2 leaders fail to have the necessary time to attend to the leadership role in an effective manner this practice will continue.

Finally, there were some differences in the perceptions of the level of influence the principal had on leadership in K-2 education. Leaders (61%) perceived the principal to be far more influential, than the teachers (48%). Does this again reflect the lack of understanding that leaders have of the influence being exerted by them on K-2 education? Further to this, it must be remembered that 9.1% of teachers (see Table 13) perceived that their principal had no primary tasks in early childhood education, or that the tasks, if any, were unknown.

In can be seen that, although leaders and teachers perceived teams of teachers to be influential sources of leadership, and that the principal had a key role in K-2 leadership, it is the degree of the agreement that must be considered.

Comparison of Perceptions of the Nature of the Leadership Role

Many similarities were evident between leaders' and teachers' responses to the nature of the leadership role in K-2 education (see Table 28). Both groups agreed that leaders responded to teachers' personal concerns with consideration, assisted teachers with their teaching practice, developed strong working relationships with parents, and had the capacity to overcome most challenges arising in K-2 education.

There were, however, some notable differences. Teachers rated leaders at a lower rate (mean score differences of 0.64) on issues related to empowering teachers to take on leadership roles and sharing decision making processes with teachers. Once again, teachers were pointing to the issues of shared decision making and leadership. Leaders believed they were carrying out these processes with greater skill than is perceived by teachers. Is it that leaders need to make the shared notion of leadership more explicit to teachers, or is it that teachers do not want to be as involved in leadership as leaders are seeking? Do teachers want to get on with their key business of teaching and leave many of the minor, 'inconsequential' leadership issues to the leaders?

Leaders also believed they were more effective in informing teachers about the meaning of high performance, than teachers believed them to be. It has to be noted that the present system does little to acknowledge high performance in teaching. The only means by which teachers' high performance can be acknowledged is through

promotion to leadership positions. This does not suit all teachers, as many have little or no desire to aspire to leadership positions. Leaders have a role to ensure that teachers have a clear understanding of what is expected in regards to achieving high performance in their teaching. How many teachers are asked to set personal goals for their teaching? Personal goal setting is integral to high performance in teaching. If teachers fail to understand what is expected of them, performance-wise, leaders can not expect high achievement from teachers, in regard to their personal development, let alone school-based outcomes. Has the press for accountability in Tasmanian schools taken the emphasis away from teachers striving for excellence within their teaching? Do teachers perceive that just meeting the desired student outcomes is all that is necessary within their teaching? If this is the case, it is a detrimental step for both students and teachers.

One other issue, which saw teachers and leaders responding in differing ways, regarded the leader having time to discuss classroom activities with teachers (mean difference of 0.61). Teachers perceived that leaders were attending to this aspect more effectively than leaders believed they were. It would appear that leaders, feeling pressed for time, believe they are undertaking this task with less attention than they would like. Teachers, on the other hand, appear to understand their leaders' situations. Many teachers responded, in other sections of the survey, that their most contacted leader needed time to do the leadership role effectively. Perhaps leaders are feeling neglectful in this regard, but it is refreshing to note teachers' understanding of the pressures being experienced by their leaders.

In summary, considerable congruence is apparent between leaders' and teachers' perceptions of the nature of the leadership role in K-2 education, although

some key differences were noted in relation to issues of shared decision making and leadership, and expectations of high performance and time for teachers.

Comparison of Perceptions of the Principal's Role, Leadership Strengths and Weaknesses, and Primary Tasks

When teachers' and principals' perceptions of the principal's role were investigated, few statements showed congruence in responses (see Table 29). The closest items were related to the two statements regarding trusting teachers to teach effectively, and empowering teachers to take on leadership roles. It is pleasing to note that both groups believe that leaders trust teachers to complete their teaching and support them in undertaking leadership roles within the school.

Differences in mean scores (greater than 1.00) between principals' and teachers' responses were noted in some areas. Two issues, the principal's lack of technical knowledge in K-2 education and the failure of the principal to provide recognition for special work completed by K-2 teachers, were rated considerably lower by teachers. This would appear to indicate that principals fail to recognise the impact that their personal lack of technical knowledge can have on the educational provision in K-2. Many teachers may be seeking support in pedagogical matters, but know that their principal has little understanding of this important issue. This can be overcome if the teacher has another leader to refer to, but what happens to those teachers who do not have this privilege? Some teachers referred to this dilemma in their responses. Principals often acknowledge their lack of expertise in this area (Stamopoulos, 1998), but the exact impact of this deficiency has not been fully explored within Australian schools.

The second statement, returning substantial difference between principals' and teachers' responses, was related to the leader recognising special work completed by teachers. Principals believe they are providing this appropriately, whilst teachers fail to agree. This opinion difference may be based upon a number of scenarios. Leaders and teachers may have differing understanding of "special work", with leaders expecting some of the things, seen by teachers to be associated with extra effort, as part of a teacher's 'normal' work. The time constraints upon leaders, discussed earlier, may mean that much special effort by teachers is simply not observed and therefore goes unrecognised. What may also hinder leaders in the provision of recognition of special effort is the often-observed fact that leaders have little trouble highlighting shortfalls in performance, but find it difficult to provide positive feedback when it is merited. Principals must be proactive in recognising teachers' achievements (Grady et al., 1994; Schmoker, 1996). Celebration of successes needs to be part of the day to day operation of the school. Teachers understand the importance of this within their daily classroom teaching. Why, then, is this not perceived by teachers to be forthcoming from their principals? Perhaps principals are too busy with other aspects of leadership to notice and acknowledge the successes of teachers. If this is the case then fewer teachers will be willing to undertake special tasks within the school, and the students will likely be the ultimate losers from those decisions.

Differences (greater than 0.8 in the means scores) were noted in principals' and teachers' responses to shared decision making processes and the principals' failure to provide information of current educational thought in K-2 education for teachers. Once again, principals perceived they were attending to these tasks more effectively than teachers believed. If teachers believe their principal is failing to provide

information on current K-2 educational issues, it must be asked, is anyone taking on this leadership role? This could mean that many K-2 teachers are not being exposed to new thinking in relation to K-2 education. Perhaps the only source of leadership in this area is coming through special departmental initiatives, in programs such as Flying Start. This is arguably not enough, with change occurring so rapidly within education today. Early childhood education is not immune to these changes. Teachers need to be exposed to current information in their teaching field, but who is undertaking this important role?

The issue of shared decision making was discussed in previous sections of this sub-question, so no further consideration will be given to this issue at this time. However, one further statement does require some discussion. Principals showed higher disagreement with the statement "leads K-2 teachers by personal example", than did responding teachers. It has been noted that one important leadership quality is leading by personal example (Regan, 1995). If principals believe they are failing to provide adequate leadership by this means, their leadership effectiveness must be affected. Are teachers being left with no role model in their teaching and learning? Teachers deserve, and need, strong positive leadership to assist them along their professional development path, be it in classroom teaching or within the field of leadership.

When teachers' and principals' perceptions of the leadership strengths exhibited by the principal were investigated, two important issues were noted. The first was that principals perceived they demonstrated higher levels of energy within their K-2 leadership role, than teachers believed they did (see Table 32). As demonstrating high levels of energy in leadership is seen to be an important aspect of successful leadership (Lashway et al., 1996; Hurty, 1995), it is somewhat concerning

to note that this was referred to in so few teachers' responses (1.9%). Perhaps this has to do with the issue of access to the principal for K-2 teachers, as 18.4% of teachers' responses referred to accessibility as a leadership weakness of the principal (see Table 33). Probably of greater concern was the fact that not one principal recognised access as a leadership weakness. It could be argued that if the principal is not seen around the school, interacting with school personnel, then teachers would not consider the principal to be displaying high levels of energy in the leadership role or being accessible for teachers.

In regard to the second aspect of leadership strengths of the principal, over twice as many teachers' responses (17.7%) referred to aspect of interpersonal skills, compared to principals' responses (8.5%) as shown in Table 32. This is a positive sign that teachers were appreciative of the high level of interpersonal relationships they had with their principals, as it is well documented that positive school relationships are fundamental to successful leadership (Grady et al., 1994; Rodd, 1994). However, 10% of teachers' responses referred to deficits in the principals' leadership in relation to support (see Table 33). Once again this links to the issue of access. A leader has to be available, and accessible, to provide support for teachers.

Further evidence to support this perspective comes from the question asking respondents to list the primary tasks undertaken by the principal in relation to K-2 education (see Table 34). In 12.2% of teachers' responses, there was reference to the presence of the principal in the K-2 area of the school. Often these comments were negatively stated indicating that the teachers believed they saw the principal far too infrequently. On the other hand, presence was only noted in 3.5% of principals' responses. Teachers quite obviously want to see more of the principal in the K-2

area of the school, although it would seem that many principals fail to see this as an important leadership task.

When considering the major difference in teachers' and principals' perceptions of the weaknesses of the principal, organisational skills was an area that was identified (see Table 33). Results showed that 21.4% of principals cited personal weaknesses in this area, whilst only 1.8% of teacher referred to this issue. This is to be expected, as the pressures associated with the completion of organisational issues would be clearly evident to the principal, but not necessarily to teachers. Time management was, by far, the issue raised most frequently by principals. It raises questions as to whether principals are feeling unable to cope with the increasing pressures being placed upon them? Maybe some principals need professional development to assist them to manage their time more effectively. Maybe, however, it is a more complicated problem, with principals being asked to undertake substantially increased workloads, and there simply not being enough hours in the day to enable all leadership roles to be completed satisfactorily.

When consideration was given to the differences between principals' and teachers' perceptions of the primary leadership tasks undertaken by the principal in relation to K-2 education, an interesting difference was noticeable (see Table 34). In 22.1% of principals' responses, reference was made to teacher-related personnel management issues. On the other hand this issue was only cited in 8.5% of teachers' responses, and in fact a further 9.1% of teachers were unaware of any tasks, or believed their principal had no primary tasks in K-2 education. This may indicate that teachers fail to understand the amount of time and energy principals give to the management of personnel aspects. Perhaps this needs to be more clearly highlighted by principals to teachers in their future discussions with staff. After all, just as

excellent teaching encourages students to develop understandings, so too does excellent leadership need to foster collegial understandings.

In conclusion, it is noticeable that some substantial differences are apparent between how principals perceived their leadership role in K-2 education and how teachers believed the principal was performing the role. Both principals and teachers provided clear indications as to how the principals' role could be enhanced. Specific suggestions from teachers included principals ensuring that they provide greater access for, and support of, teachers, whilst principals pointed to organisational and personnel issues as demanding facets of their leadership.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Leadership is of critical importance in all facets of successful education (Lashway et al., 1996; Sergiovanni, 1996). The early childhood sector of education is no exception. K-2 classroom teachers need to feel supported, and thus empowered, to enable them to successfully cope with the ongoing educational and social changes being experienced as part of their teaching role. In the end, the quality of leadership provided can impact, both positively and negatively, upon the nature of the educational program being provided for K-2 students (Rodd, 1994).

In the Tasmanian education system, over the past decade, devolution of decision-making from the central authority to individual school-based management has resulted in significant changes in leadership provision in K-2 education. The leadership role has become more generically conceived. This change has resulted in many substantive leadership positions in K-2 education being filled by individuals who possess qualifications other than those related to early childhood education.

To the author's knowledge, the impact of this practice upon K-2 teachers, students, and leaders themselves has not been thoroughly reviewed or documented. Therefore, investigating the nature and effects of this changing K-2 leadership situation became the focus of this study. In brief, the study sought to investigate the nature of K-2 leaders' and teachers' perceptions, regarding the nature of leadership in K-2 education in Tasmanian schools, by considering the findings of a survey conducted in two school districts.

This chapter reinforces the importance of the study, presents a summary of findings in relation to current literature on the topic and the key research question,

provides a summary of methods and procedures utilised, draws conclusions in relation to the original questions outlined for consideration, and considers implications of the study and recommendations for further investigation.

Importance of the Study and the Key Research Question

The study's importance lies in its ability to add to the relatively small body of published knowledge concerning leadership in early childhood education. The study also has the potential to inform state educational practitioners and authorities about the nature of leadership in the K-2 area of schools. Given that the Department of Education in Tasmania is currently undertaking a review of early childhood education, the study may have the potential to provide further information regarding the present position in relation to K-2 leadership in Tasmanian schools.

In broad terms, the study sought to establish the nature of leadership in K-2 education, by gathering and comparing the perceptions of K-2 leaders and teachers, concerning various factors associated with early childhood education leadership. The data gathered enabled concurrence and difference between the perceptions of leaders and teachers to be identified, with respect to K-2 leadership and also in terms of the challenges currently faced by early childhood education.

The study sought answers to the key research question: In what ways do present school leaders' and K-2 teachers' perceptions concur and differ, regarding leadership in early childhood education, and in turn, what perceived challenges do K-2 school leaders and teachers see as key issues for K-2 education, in Tasmanian schools today?

Subsequently, seven sub-questions were devised to allow detailed consideration of the similarities and differences between leaders' and teachers' perceptions of K-2 leadership in their schools. Comparisons of perceptions were based upon gender,

position classification (leaders only), area of specialisation, and level of qualifications. Perceptions on the effect of lack of early childhood specialisation and identification of K-2 leadership challenges were also considered.

Summary of Current Literature

A detailed literature review was undertaken. This literature highlighted the importance of the following aspects in the successful leadership of K-2 education:

- trust, support, and respect (Bishop & Mulford, 1996; Grady et al., 1994);
- effective communication and high level interpersonal skills (Anderson, 1998; Leithwood, Begley, et al., 1994; Rodd, 1994);
- personal competence in the technical core of the leader's area of leadership responsibility (Stamopoulos, 1994; Leithwood, Begley, et al., 1994);
- regular presence and involvement in classrooms (Mortimore et al., 1993; Leithwood & Aitken, 1995);
- shared decision making and collaborative processes (Mulford et al., 1997; Goldring & Sullivan, 1993); and
- recognition and encouragement of high performance (Schmoker, 1996; Grady et al., 1994).

As indicated later in this chapter, all of these aspects, except recognition and encouragement of high performance, were supported by study participants, as being important for quality leadership.

Summary of Methods and Procedures

The study was based upon multi-faceted survey instruments, which were developed specifically for the study by the researcher. This development was based

upon utilisation of current literature concerning educational leadership excellence, which was applied to address the specific needs of K-2 leadership. The surveys were compiled in such a way as to gather information from K-2 leaders and teachers which would enable assessments of the current leadership provision to be made in comparison with the literature's benchmarks. These instruments sought teachers' and leaders' perceptions regarding various aspects of K-2 leadership. Surveys were chosen for the data gathering process as they represent a reliable means of obtaining standardised, quantifiable data from the sample population (Gay, 1996). A selection of question types were employed in the surveys, including closed-items for gathering demographic data (Gay, 1996), open-ended items to allow respondents to provide their own perspectives on issues (Burns, 1997) and scaled items designed to allow respondents to indicate their level of agreement with a specific statement, according to a fixed scale (Burns, 1997). The surveys were specifically and carefully designed to address the study's research questions, which were compiled with the sole purpose of gathering current and relevant data, pertaining to the Tasmanian context. The survey methodology employed was found to successfully provide base data, from which appropriate findings concerning the research questions could be extracted.

The stratified sample population, from two districts within the Tasmanian state school system, comprised principals (n=30), early childhood senior staff (n=30), and early childhood teachers (n=245), from 30 selected schools. From this available population, survey respondents comprised principals (n=19), senior staff (n=21), and teachers (n=101). Although this response rate provided sufficient data to allow meaningful conclusions to be drawn, the rate may have been improved if the surveys had been administered at a more appropriate time, not approaching the end of the school year when all school staff have heavy workload commitments. More direct

access to staff in some of the target schools, during the 'informational' phase of the survey process, may have enhanced the response rate through improved promotion of the potential benefits to be gained from the study and by dealing with some of the confidentiality and anonymity concerns.

Analysis of the data was undertaken utilising computer-based procedures, including Excel spreadsheets to record and consolidate the data, and SPSS, which is designed to provide statistical analysis of quantitative data. Both of these packages proved to be suitable applications for the purposes of the study.

Conclusions from Findings

The summarised findings are presented by considering each sub-question from the study. The first sub-question was:

- What are school leaders' perceptions of the nature of leadership in relation to K-2 education, in their schools?

Leaders indicated that they believed that their leadership of K-2 was strongly founded upon trust and support of teachers, with many leaders stating that interpersonal skills were personal leadership strengths. However, a group of 7.1% of participating leaders believed that they had weaknesses in interpersonal skills, referring to traits such as bossiness, intolerance, impatience, and lack of sensitivity.

Leaders also perceived that helping K-2 teachers to improve their teaching practice was an integral part of their leadership role, with 11.9% indicating that they believed that they lacked the knowledge to successfully fulfil this requirement.

Leaders indicated that they were committed to shared leadership, and they cited teams as forming the major source of leadership within their schools. This leadership approach is transformational in style (Leithwood, Begley et al., 1996), with promotion

of the fundamental importance of professional learning communities within schools' operations. Furthermore, many leaders referred to utilising facilitative means of providing professional development for K-2 teachers on their staff.

Provision of adequate levels of resources was identified as a leadership priority. However, in considering the capabilities required to meet this priority, 23.8% leaders felt that their leadership skills were deficient in organisational areas, with time management seen as a constant challenge.

In summary, leaders in the study trusted and supported teachers on their staff, they were committed to supporting and improving K-2 teaching and learning, providing necessary financial, personnel and material resources, and they valued shared leadership. However, leadership weaknesses were highlighted in the areas of interpersonal and organisational skills.

Sub-question two was:

- What are K-2 teachers' perceptions of the nature of leadership in relation to K-2 leadership, in their schools?

Teachers in the study believed that their leaders trusted them to teach effectively and were supportive and approachable. In their responses, 54.6% of teachers cited their principal as having high level skills in relationships, although 10.2% indicated that their principals had deficits in relation to pastoral care, and conflict and behaviour management. However, it should be noted that teachers' comments indicated that they were seeking leadership in professional matters only, and not in relation to their personal needs. This personal aspect was seen as the least important leadership factor in K-2 by participating teachers. All but one teacher who perceived that their principal had interpersonal skill weaknesses reported to male

principals, a finding supported by previous research by Shakeshaft (1995) and Macbeath et al. (1996).

When considering their most contacted leader, teachers in the study cited pastoral care and their leaders' personal traits of sensitivity and respect as strengths. However, 14.2% of teachers indicated that their most contacted leader lacked interpersonal skills in the areas of communication and assertiveness. Positive presence in the K-2 area of the school was seen to be integral to successful leadership, by teachers, and 19.6% of them believed that their principal failed to maintain this presence and was not readily accessible to K-2 teachers. Accessibility to their most contacted leader was also a highlighted as a problem, with 8.8% of teachers indicating that these leaders failed to allow sufficient time for contact with K-2 teachers and students. Although teachers in the study did not identify shared leadership as a key facet of leadership, teams were recognised as an important source of leadership, as were classroom teachers.

Teachers cited provision of adequate resources as an important component of K-2 leadership, indicating a general satisfaction with this. When considering their most contacted leader, 13.2% of teachers referred to them as having deficient organisational skills, particularly with respect to time management issues (particularly those associated with balancing the combined demands of teaching and leadership).

Teachers felt that improving teaching practice was a central factor in leadership of K-2. Approximately 50% of teachers in the study believed that their principal failed to provide information on current research related to K-2 teaching initiatives, and did not have a sound grasp of K-2 children's learning needs. By contrast, approximately 80% of surveyed teachers believed that their most contacted leader could fulfil these leadership roles. Nevertheless, 13.2% of teachers' responses referred

to their most contacted leader having leadership weaknesses in the technical core of K-2 education, citing lack of professional development, having a specialisation other than early childhood, and only having temporary tenure of the leadership position as possible reasons for the weaknesses.

In summary, teachers within the study believed that they were trusted to teach effectively. For both their principal and most contacted leader, teachers identified deficits in interpersonal skills and in knowledge of the technical core of K-2 education. The teachers' view, that K-2 leaders required sound technical knowledge of K-2 education, is supported by previous research by Rodd (1994) and Leithwood, Begley, et al. (1994). Teachers also believed they should have greater access to their leaders and that their leaders needed to take higher profiles in the K-2 area of their schools.

The third sub-question was:

- What similarities and differences are evident between school leaders' and K-2 teachers' perceptions of the leadership role for K-2 education?

Both K-2 teachers and leaders believed that demonstrating trust and support of teachers was the most important aspect of early childhood leadership. Considering interpersonal skills, both groups identified leaders' strengths in people and communication skills. However, leaders also referred to personal weaknesses in interpersonal skills, citing deficits such as intolerance, insensitivity, or impatience, whilst teachers cited similar weaknesses for their most contacted leaders. This finding concurs with previous research by Rodd (1998) who reported that early childhood leaders often feel uncomfortable dealing with adults. However, failure to demonstrate effective interpersonal skills with adults is not acceptable in leadership, as K-2 teachers expect, and require, their leaders to display competence in those skills.

Furthermore, teachers in this study indicated that their principals displayed weaknesses in the areas of accessibility and management of behaviour and conflict.

Teachers rated the demonstration of a positive presence in K-2 as their third most important leadership factor, giving it greater emphasis than the leaders. However, many principals cited their primary leadership tasks as being personnel-based, with teacher related matters taking priority. By comparison, few teachers saw this as a primary task of their principal and cited the leader's presence at school as a high priority. Both groups, leaders and teachers, placed strong emphasis on the principal's role in the day to day running of the school.

Both leaders and teachers saw improving K-2 teaching practices as a key component of leadership. Teachers were particularly critical of principals' skills in K-2 pedagogy and their leadership in this area, whilst principals indicated they avoided problems associated with shortfalls in personal knowledge by utilising facilitative means of professional development for teachers.

Both leaders and teachers agreed that other K-2 teachers were the major source of leadership in K-2, with both groups referring to teams of K-2 teachers as the highest rated source. However, teachers rated individual K-2 teachers as the second highest leadership source, in preference to all substantive leadership positions. By comparison, leaders only ranked individual teachers fourth in priority as a source of leadership, after principals and AST 2s. In general, leaders indicated that they believed that shared leadership was an important factor in leadership (third most important), whilst teachers rated this factor much lower (tenth most important) in their perceptions. It is clear that leaders are taking a more facilitative view and approach to leadership than teachers, by strongly promoting professional communities. This confirms that leaders in this study supported a transformational mode of leadership

(Leithwood, Begley, et al., 1996; Anderson, 1998), where distributive practices are central to schools' organisational learning, with leaders valuing the contributions of teachers in this team-based process. However, teachers' responses indicated that only 71% were convinced of the merit of this approach, which is a concern given the overwhelming focus on distributive leadership by so many of their leaders (97%). The fact that 29% of teachers considered that such changes in leadership practice were unimportant for effective school operation is supported by the finding that many more leaders (21.4%) than teachers (8.2%) believed that overall educational change was an important challenge in K-2.

Resourcing was seen as an important leadership issue by both leaders and teachers, with time related matters being cited frequently by both parties. Leaders referred to the increased demands caused by managerial devolution to schools, when 29.7% indicated that they believed that they had personal deficits in organisational and administrative matters within their management roles. This supports previous findings by Vander Ven (1991) and Rodd (1998). By comparison, teachers referred to the pressures of time allocation with their leaders undertaking both classroom teaching and leadership responsibilities, which supports the research by Gamage (1998).

Key differences between teachers' and leaders' views of the leadership role in K-2 were evident in relation to shared leadership practices, the technical knowledge of the principal, and the accessibility and presence of the principal in the K-2 area of the school. Similarities between the groups were apparent in relation to the high importance that both leaders and teachers placed on trust and support, the improvement of K-2 teaching practice and the provision of adequate resourcing for K-2 education.

Sub-question four was:

- What perceived impact does the leaders' gender, school type, level of specialisation, and position classification have on their leadership in K-2?

As a result of statistical analysis of the leaders' data in relation to the gender of leaders, it was found that female leaders believed that they were more energetic, had better relationships with school personnel and had a greater knowledge of K-2 education than did male leaders. These findings concur with findings in research by Hurty (1995), Shakeshaft (1995), and Regan (1995).

When comparative analyses were undertaken in relation to leaders' school type, leaders in primary schools indicated that they believed they demonstrated greater respect for, and higher interpersonal skills with, K-2 teachers, than did leaders in district high schools.

Responses from leaders, when compared based upon their specialisations, indicated that leaders with an early childhood specialisation believed they had a greater level of personal knowledge of K-2 education than leaders with primary, secondary or physical education specialisations. Furthermore, early childhood trained leaders also perceived that they were more energetic in their leadership than their primary trained colleagues. Considering the position classification of leaders, it was shown that AST 2s and APs believed leaders' knowledge of K-2 education was more important than principals believed.

When teachers' perceptions were analysed in relation to their principal's specialisation, it was found that primary trained principals were perceived to be more collaborative, to possess higher level interpersonal skills, to be more supportive, to provide more encouragement for high performance, and to have greater expertise in professional development than those principals with a secondary specialisation.

Furthermore, teachers perceived that contacted APs were more collaborative than contacted AST 2s, APs were more accessible than AST 1s, and APs provided more professional development than contacted AST 2s.

When teachers' responses were considered in relation to their most contacted leader's gender, it was found that female leaders were perceived to be more collaborative, accessible and supportive, to possess greater expertise in K-2 education, provide superior professional development, and better support high performance, than their male colleagues. These findings concur with Kinney's (1992) research cited by Rodd (1994), which found that women were more facilitative in their leadership than their male colleagues. Further to this, in relation to the specialisation of teachers' most contacted leaders, teachers perceived that primary trained leaders had greater expertise in professional development than their early childhood counterparts.

In conclusion, it can be seen that leaders' gender, school type, level of specialisation and position classification all had an impact on the nature of the leadership provided.

The fifth sub-question of the study was:

- What perceived impact does the teachers' school type, type of specialisation and level of qualifications have on their perceptions of the K-2 leadership?

Results from comparative analyses of data indicated that teachers in primary schools believed they had greater access to their most contacted leader than did responding teachers from district high schools. In relation to teachers' level of qualifications, respondents with an 'Other Degree', or TTC only, believed that their leaders better utilised collaborative practices than did leaders with a B Ed and TTC qualification. Furthermore, teachers with a TTC qualification perceived their leaders

were more accessible and had better interpersonal skills than did teachers with a B Ed and TTC qualification. It was apparent that teachers with higher qualifications were more discerning of their leaders' provision of leadership. Given the nature of the ageing teaching force in Tasmanian schools, the expected influx of more highly qualified teachers will have significant implications for the expectations placed upon K-2 leaders in the future.

In summary, teachers in primary schools believed that they had greater opportunities to access their K-2 leader, than their colleagues in district high schools, and teachers with lower levels of qualifications perceived their leaders to be more collaborative and accessible than their colleagues who were more highly qualified.

The sixth sub-question of the study was:

- What perceived impact does lack of early childhood training have on how leaders fulfil their leadership role in K-2 education?

Responses to survey items associated with this sub-question revealed that a majority of teachers believed that not having early childhood training affected K-2 leaders' effectiveness, whilst leaders' responses were evenly divided. Although there were no statistically significant differences between those who answered 'yes' or 'no' to this question, there were two factors just marginally outside the defined limit for significance, within the leaders' responses. Leaders who responded in the affirmative considered energy and leaders' knowledge to be of greater importance in leadership than those leaders who answered in the negative.

In considering reasons provided from those who indicated that K-2 training was important, teachers and leaders both offered similar beliefs in relation to the need for specific knowledge of K-2 education by leaders. However, teachers indicated that they also believed that practical experience in teaching a K-2 class was integral to

successful leadership of K-2, whilst no leaders indicated that this was a key factor. Responses from those who believed that lack of K-2 training did not limit effectiveness were also similar in content from both groups, with teachers and leaders both offering reasons including leaders' ongoing learning, shared leadership, and the generic nature of leadership.

In summary, although leaders and teachers generally held similar views related to this question, teachers indicated the belief that, for effective leadership, there was a need for K-2 leaders to have teaching experience in an early childhood class.

Sub-question seven was:

- What are the greatest challenges for K-2 education today, as perceived by school leaders and teachers?

The greatest challenges for K-2 education today were seen by leaders to involve matters of educational change, with particular attention to balancing the crowded curriculum. Leaders also referred to the need to raise school and community awareness of the importance of K-2 leadership. Another challenge highlighted by leaders related to the conflict for available time to complete classroom teaching and leadership tasks. Leaders also believed that a challenge lay in protecting teachers and students from unrealistic, politically motivated demands.

Teachers involved in the study believed that the key challenges involved the need to enhance leaders' knowledge and understanding in relation to the educational needs of K-2 children and what happens in early childhood classrooms. Teachers also referred to the competition for time between classroom and leadership duties, believing that leaders should have adequate, balanced time available for both roles. Another challenge highlighted by teachers related to the ability for leaders to be able to make themselves accessible to, and be supportive of, their staff and students.

In summary, leaders and teachers in the study agreed that managing the time available to satisfy both teaching and leadership commitments was a key challenge for today's K-2 leaders. In addition, leaders highlighted challenges associated with educational change, whilst teachers referred to challenges involving leaders' accessibility, support of school community members and knowledge of K-2 education.

Implications of the Study

Within this study, a number of key issues pertaining to quality leadership in K-2 education within Tasmanian schools became apparent. The three most important issues highlighted by both leaders and teachers were: trust and support of K-2 teachers by their leaders, as previously suggested in research on educational leadership (see Bishop & Mulford, 1996 and Anderson, 1998); commitment to improving K-2 teaching processes and personal competence in K-2 pedagogy by leaders, as highlighted in recent research (see Stamopoulos, 1994 and Leithwood, Begley, et al., 1994); and possession of high level competence in communication and interpersonal skills by leaders as shown in investigations (see Grady et al., 1994 and Rodd, 1994).

Further to these issues, teachers indicated that they believed that the regular presence of their leaders in K-2 classrooms was highly desirable. This finding supports results found by Leithwood and Aitken (1995) and Mortimore et al. (1993). Leaders strongly supported the notion of shared leadership and utilisation of collaborative processes which was proposed in research by Goldring and Sullivan (1993) and Mulford et al. (1997). Comparison of this study's findings and current research as reported in the literature, serves to indicate that Tasmanian leaders and teachers are valuing leadership traits which were seen by many influential writers as key factors in successful leadership, i.e. trust and support, high level interpersonal

skills, and specific technical knowledge in the area of leadership. However, in considering the current performance of leaders in the field of K-2 education, both leaders and teachers highlighted a number of leadership deficiencies. These deficiencies have implications for K-2 education. In what follows each of these issues is presented, together with their implications for K-2 education and suggested solutions.

1. *Teachers indicated that some principals and inexperienced most contacted leaders demonstrated poor communication and conflict resolution skills.* Teachers are unwilling to interact with leaders who possess these skill deficiencies. As a result, teachers are not only ignoring these leaders (perhaps because of perceived incompetence) but also seeking out others for leadership assistance and advice. In the worst scenario, this perceived leadership shortfall leads to a total breakdown in relationships between leaders and teachers. To avoid this situation, opportunities are needed for leaders to increase their expertise in communication and general interpersonal relationships. Such opportunities could be provided in the form of professional development or training sessions in these areas. Of course, a major initial deterrent to the lack of progress in this area is the problem of leaders not recognising their skill deficiencies in interpersonal areas and therefore not availing themselves of any offered development opportunities. More open and shared use of questionnaires, such as those employed in the study, could help to highlight where leadership deficiencies exist

2. *The lack of technical knowledge in K-2 education by some principals and most contacted leaders, as highlighted in the study by many teachers and some leaders.* Failure to address this issue could see leaders continuing to make inappropriate

decisions in relation to K-2 education, resulting in their loss of credibility in the eyes of K-2 staff, increasing teachers' uncertainty as to where to turn for leadership. The deleterious effect upon the quality of educational provision to K-2 students in these schools, as a result of poorly-founded decisions, is a serious by-product of this situation. Every classroom teacher needs a designated K-2 leader/expert to whom they can refer, regarding technical issues related to teaching and learning in early childhood. The present practice, employed by some schools, of bringing in outside support on an occasional, ad-hoc basis is inadequate, as it fails to provide the timely, day-to-day support being sought by (and necessary for) so many K-2 teachers. It should be noted that principals cannot be expected to possess technical expertise in all areas of schools' operations. As highlighted by K-2 teachers in this study, they must have an available source of day-to-day technical assistance from the education system, either within their school or, at the very least, at district level.

3. *Lack of access to, and presence of, the principal in the K-2 area of the school.* Teachers strongly endorsed the need to have regular access to their principal and for their principal to be interested in, and to regularly visit, K-2 classrooms. The study revealed that principals' failure in these aspects led to teachers feeling isolated and believing that the principal had no interest in K-2 children, the quality of their education and their teachers. This problem is especially relevant for district high school leaders, as teachers in those schools felt more highly neglected than their colleagues in primary schools. Principals need to make time available for K-2 teachers and children, and demonstrate their interest and support through regular visits to K-2 classes as part of their routine leadership activities. This would assist in developing stronger relationships between K-2 teachers and their

principal, and also early childhood children and their principal. Given the level of concern that teachers expressed for the lack of principals' presence in the K-2 area of schools, it is time for the education system, especially principals, to seriously consider this problem. Better implementation of shared leadership processes may be a means of improvement in this area. However, the group involved in this shared leadership **must** include the principal and/or other involved substantive leaders. This would contribute to those involved in the leadership group having improved credibility in teachers' views. It is still essential that principals make available time for visiting the K-2 areas in their schools, as a personal demonstration of their commitment to this area of their leadership.

4. *Stress experienced by some leaders who have dual teaching and leadership roles.* Teachers and leaders alike noted the pressure on many leaders of managing the available time in order to satisfy the needs of both teaching and leadership roles. Extreme pressure and unrealistic expectations, especially on junior or less experienced leaders, can only lead to feelings of stress and inadequacy. It is well documented (Groundwater-Smith, Cusworth & Dobbins, 1998) that stressed leaders often make inappropriate decisions and as a result frequently require sick leave. As leaders try to complete both roles, with limited time off class, neither is completed effectively. The ultimate result is that K-2 children's education suffers adversely, both as a result of ineffective leadership throughout the K-2 classes in the school and directly in the leader's own classroom, as a result of the time management demands. In situations where leaders also have class responsibilities, as is currently often the case, these leaders must be given adequate time away from their class to fulfil their leadership roles. In this way, it can be argued that they are being fair to young children, other K-2 teachers, and also to themselves. As

As decisions regarding time allocation (on class versus leadership) are school-based, there is often pressure on decision-makers to conserve teacher cost resources by extending 'part-time' leaders' class time allocation. Whilst conserving some resources, this practice results in the leadership time management dilemmas highlighted in the study. To assist schools to decide on effective time usage, guidelines should be developed by the department, indicating appropriate leadership time allocations, dependent upon school size.

5. *Leaders appear to place greater importance on shared leadership than K-2 teachers.* Leaders in the study were almost universally committed to utilising shared leadership processes, rating it as the third most important factor. However, K-2 teachers indicated less enthusiasm for this leadership process with it being only rated as their tenth most important factor of leadership, although they did nominate teams of teachers as an important source of leadership. One has to wonder whether teachers are seeing the current drive for shared leadership as fragmenting the leadership role, and whether some view it as an avoidance of responsibility by substantive leaders. It might also be an attempt by the teachers to avoid this shared responsibility, escaping into their classrooms and closing the doors. The widely recognised benefits of shared leadership need to better communicated to K-2 teachers, with areas in which shared leadership can be gainfully utilised carefully defined, along with those areas in which substantive leadership is more appropriate. Schools each need at least one designated K-2 leader, to whom teachers can refer with confidence, particularly in relation to technical K-2 educational matters, but also in more general terms. The validity of the appointment of a designated K-2 person in each school would be strengthened by departmental and district support and acknowledgment.

6. *Teachers perceive that APs, as leaders, are more collaborative, provide better professional development, and are more accessible than AST 2s.* Lack of leadership credibility for AST 2s may be exacerbated by a single factor: their dual teaching and leadership roles, which is much less common for APs. Collaboration and accessibility, by their nature, require time, which is often limited for leaders with a teaching responsibility. As recommended in point 4, rationalisation of AST 2s' (and AST 3s') teaching loads needs to occur to allow them more time to satisfy the requirements of their leadership responsibilities. Many leaders in K-2 were identified as lacking in interpersonal relationship skills, instructional and pedagogical matters, and managerial skills. AST 2s and AST 3s were also perceived to have specific deficits in collaborative practice skills. These deficits in management skills are exacerbated by the dearth of leadership training opportunities currently available for K-2 leaders. Indeed, there is a real need for leadership training for middle managers within the system, and again the time availability factor must be addressed to allow the training to be received in order to achieve longer term gains in leadership effectiveness. One possible solution to this shortage of development opportunities lies in the state education authority taking a broader view of its current Principals for the Future development program, reconfiguring it slightly to become a Leaders for the Future program. Many of the components of this program are already suited ideally to the requirements of all leaders, not just aspiring principals. This would certainly assist in addressing the problem currently being experienced by AST 2s, and indeed other K-2 leaders.
7. *Little attention is given to celebration of achievements in the performance of teachers and leaders.* Although goals are set and outcomes achieved at school level as part of school accountability procedures, it would appear that successes are

not being adequately recognised at the school level. Celebration of successes and encouragement to achieve set goals is seen by leadership writers (Grady et al., 1994; Schmoker, 1996) as being an important component of successful leadership. Low levels of support and encouragement of K-2 teachers (and leaders) almost inevitably lead to feelings of being undervalued and/or ignored. The importance of celebrating successes needs to be raised at school level and more scope (including time) needs to be made available for leaders to give recognition as deserved, and encouragement as required, to K-2 teachers.

In addition to these seven issues, several other noteworthy findings were revealed during the completion of the study. Whilst undertaking the factor analysis processes, it was revealed that teachers view K-2 leadership in a different way to their leaders. Teachers see leadership in broader terms than leaders, who are more discerning regarding the discreet components and attributes which contribute to successful leaderhip. An implication of this finding is that, for teachers to become successful leaders, they need to undertake specific professional development designed to enhance their knowledge of, and skills in, educational leadership practices. This recommendation is especially relevant for middle managers who do not necessarily have aspirations to become principals, but who continue to play an active leadership role within K-2 education in our Tasmanian schools.

The difference in responses from primary and district high school leaders and teachers in the study is worthy of further consideration. Leaders from primary schools believed that they demonstrated greater respect for, and had better relationships with, K-2 teachers, than did leaders in district high schools. Furthermore, when primary school teachers' responses were analysed, it was revealed that they perceived they had greater access to their most contacted leader than their colleagues in district high

schools. This appears to indicate that district high school leaders need to make themselves more accessible to K-2 teachers, which in turn should improve the interpersonal relationships between themselves and K-2 teachers. An obvious deterrent to this occurring is the available time factor, with district high school leaders generally having more classes in which to demonstrate their presence and accessibility.

A further finding which is worthy of special mention relates to the difference between teachers' responses, when consideration is given to their level of qualifications. The study revealed that teachers with lower qualifications perceived their leaders to be more collaborative, more accessible and to display better interpersonal skills than did teachers with higher qualifications. This causes the writer to ponder whether teachers with lower qualifications are receiving greater levels of support and contact from their K-2 leaders, with leaders perceiving that teachers with higher levels of qualifications are less in need of support. It could also be that leaders see teachers with higher qualifications as somewhat of an educational threat, owing to their increased level of expertise in the technical aspects of teaching and learning. Also, completion of higher level academic courses may increase the teachers' awareness concerning the quality of collaboration, accessibility and interpersonal skills, resulting in greater expectations in terms of their school-based leaders capabilities in these areas.

One final observation needs to be made at this point. Throughout this study it has become clearly evident that both teachers and leaders fail to recognise AST 1s as leaders within the school. They were perceived, in the study, by teachers and leaders alike to be the least influential source of leadership in K-2 education. Although the guidelines for successful promotion to an AST 1 level require teachers to be involved

in leadership tasks within their school, it is interesting to consider why both teachers and leaders failed to recognise them as leaders within their schools. Perhaps the most likely explanation is that elevation to AST 1, rather than being a promotion with associated involvement in school leadership, has simply become another rung on the teaching scale, with no inherent benefit to the leadership structure within Tasmanian schools.

Recommendations for Further Action

Several recommendations are made regarding issues suitable for further action in the area of K-2 leadership within Tasmanian schools. The nine recommendations, three of which (1 to 3) would complement this study and six of which (4 to 9) have arisen as the result of this study, are listed below:

1. A longitudinal, qualitative case study, in one Tasmanian school, to investigate the nature of the K-2 leadership provision. Data collected from this type of study would enable more detailed definition of the day-to-day provision of leadership in the school's K-2 area.
2. As only one male teacher participated in this study, it would appropriate to undertake a similar, wider-based study to this one, to investigate what Australian K-2 male teachers' views are regarding leadership in early childhood education, to allow comparisons and contrasts to be drawn between the two genders.
3. More widespread utilisation of the questionnaires developed for this study, in further schools within Tasmania and also in other Australian states, would have the potential to fulfil two requirements. Firstly, individual schools, or districts, could utilise survey results to assess their existing K-2 leadership situations, forming a basis for the planning of school or district-based professional development

activities. Secondly, the data collected would supplement that already gathered in this study to enable the validity and reliability of findings to be further examined. This could also provide more data from male K-2 teachers.

4. As AST 1s were perceived to exert such a low leadership influence in K-2 education in this study, it would be appropriate to investigate the role of AST 1s in Tasmanian schools to ascertain what specific leadership contributions these staff members make in K-2 education.
5. A further study could involve an examination of the nature and role of K-2 leaders who have dual teaching and leadership responsibilities, to ascertain the impact this practice is having on the leaders themselves, and on education in K-2.
6. Given the discrepancy between the views of teachers and leaders on the notion of shared leadership practices in K-2 education, a study designed to consider K-2 teachers' and leaders' views of this topic, and to develop a combined understanding of its role in current leadership, could be undertaken.
7. In the study, a pressing need was identified for the statewide coordination of K-2 leadership. As a vehicle for this process, it is strongly recommended that the Department of Education address this issue as a matter of priority within the current Early Childhood Review process. This would contribute significantly to ensuring congruence of educational and leadership practices in K-2 across Tasmania. The appointment of a K-2 resource leader in each educational district would be a positive move in bringing middle managers, such as AST 2s, AST 3s, and APs together to enhance the K-2 teaching and learning process through effective implementation of changes proposed within the Early Childhood Review.
8. As a matter of priority, professional development opportunities in educational leadership should be made available by the Department of Education for AST 2s,

AST 3s, and APs,. Reconfiguring the existing Principals for the Future program to suit the professional development needs of all educational leaders, rather than just aspiring principals, may be an effective means of addressing this requirement.

9. Given the more discerning views of leadership held by more qualified teachers and the progression towards a more qualified teaching workforce, a study of the increased K-2 leadership expectations of such teachers would provide valuable information on the implications that these staffing changes will have on educational leadership.

APPENDIX 1

OVERVIEW OF KEY RESEARCH QUESTION AND SUB-QUESTIONS

THE NATURE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE EARLY YEARS: KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 2 IN TASMANIAN SCHOOLS

RESEARCH QUESTION

In what ways do present school leaders' and Kindergarten to Grade 2 teachers' perceptions concur and differ, regarding leadership in the Early Years of education, and in turn what perceived challenges do Kindergarten to Grade 2 school leaders and teachers see as key issues for K-2 education in Tasmanian schools today?

Sub-questions

What are school leaders' perceptions of the nature of leadership in relation to K-2 education, in their schools?

What are K - 2 teachers' perceptions of the nature of leadership for K-2 education, in their schools?

What similarities and differences are evident between school leaders' and K - 2 teachers' perceptions of the leadership role for ECE?

What perceived impact does the leaders' level of specialisation, level of qualifications, classification, school, and gender type have on their leadership in K-2?

What perceived impact does the teachers' level of specialisation, level of qualifications, school type, and gender have on their perceptions of K-2 leadership?

What are the key challenges for K-2 education today, as perceived by school leaders and teachers?

What perceived impact does lack of early childhood training have on how leaders fulfil their leadership role in K-2 education?

APPENDIX 2

OFFICIAL INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

Department of Early Childhood/Primary Education

RESEARCH STUDY:
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE EARLY YEARS (K-2) IN TASMANIA

This research project, which is part of my Educational Doctorate studies at the University of Tasmania, is aimed at providing a comprehensive view of the changing and evolving nature of educational leadership for the Early Years (Kindergarten to Grade 2) in Tasmanian schools. Educational leadership is a key factor in bringing about positive changes in schools, for students, teachers and the school community. Your perceptions concerning the K-2 leadership provision at your school will assist in drawing conclusions, which could ultimately be used to enhance teaching and learning in Kindergarten to Grade 2 in the future.

The questionnaire seeks relevant demographic information, and then your perceptions on the educational leadership provided for Kindergarten to Grade 2 students and teachers at your present school. It is anticipated that the entire survey process should take approximately 20 minutes of your time to complete. Your participation in this study is keenly sought, as it is only those school members who are actually actively involved in schools who can provide particularly insightful perceptions regarding leadership in schools today.

Anonymity is guaranteed and no respondent will be individually identifiable in the resulting study report, either by the researcher or other persons. Your participation is voluntary and you are free to decline to answer questions if you choose to do so. Please be assured that confidentiality of your responses is guaranteed. You will note that your survey has a number on it. This number will not be linked with your name in any way and will only be used to enable me to monitor the surveys returned from each school. The completed surveys will only be handled by the researcher and all information gathered will be held in a securely locked location. Surveys will be destroyed by shredding after data analysis is completed. This study has received approval from the University Ethics Committee (Human Experimentation). If you have any concerns of an ethical nature regarding this study and its procedures, you may contact the Executive Officer, of the aforementioned committee, Ms Chris Hooper on (03) 62 262763.

Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. It is proposed that, during 1999, I will hold sessions to share the study's findings with you. My sincere thanks for your anticipated assistance in this research study. Please contact me, on (03) 63 243725, if you require further clarification on any aspect of the study.

Margot

Margot Boardman
Lecturer in Early Childhood

PO Box 1214 Launceston
Tasmania 7250 Australia
Telephone 03 6324 3725
Facsimile 03 6324 3048

APPENDIX 3

CONTENT CATEGORIES AND STATEMENT ITEMS FOR THE SCALED SECTION OF THE SURVEYS

CONTENT CATEGORIES AND STATEMENT ITEMS FOR THE SCALED SECTION OF THE SURVEY

LEADERSHIP VISION AND TEAM BUILDING

- * I demonstrate high energy level in my leadership. *Lashway et al. (1996); Hurty (1995).* **(39)**
- * I have the capacity to overcome most challenges arising in respect to early childhood education. **(36)**
- I have a positive presence in the early childhood area of the school. *Leithwood & Aitken (1995); LOLSO Project (1997); Stoll & Fink (1996).* **(5)**
- * I encourage early childhood teachers to feel and act like leaders in this school. *Blase & Blase (1997); Fullan (1991); Rodd (1994); ASSR 1.3.2 (1998).* **(54)**
- * I engender a sense of purpose in EC teachers' work. **(34)**
- * I encourage innovation by, and consultation with, EC teachers. *Mulford et al. (1997); Goldring & Rallis (1993); Staff Survey 49 (1996); ASSR 1.4.3 (1998.)* **(47)**
- I demonstrate shared decision-making processes. *Mulford et al. (1997); Goldring & Rallis (1993); Leithwood, Begley, et al. (1994); ASSR 1.1.2 (1998).* **(29)**
- Collaborative problem solving is part of my leadership style. *Hallinger & Hausman (1995); Hill (1994); Goldring & Sullivan (1996).* **(37)**
- * (N) I encourage EC teachers to work towards school goals. *Leithwood, Begley, et al. (1994); ASSR 1.2.1 (1998).* **(3)**
- * I encourage EC teachers to regularly evaluate progress made towards goals for ECE. *Goldring & Rallis(1993).* **(32)**
- (N) I encourage contributions from all EC teachers. *Goldring & Rallis (1993); ASSR 1.3.3 (1998).* **(28)**
- I equally value contributions from all EC teachers. *LOLSO Project (1997); Staff Survey 38 (1996).* **(12)**
- I demonstrate an ability to compromise with EC teachers. *Hill (1994).* **(50)**
- I demonstrate risk-taking in my leadership. – *Fullan (1991); Regan (1995); ASSR 1.4.3(1998).* **(38)**
- I encourage and support risk-taking by EC teachers. *ASSR 1.4.3 (1998).* **(15)**

- I facilitate opportunities for K-2 teachers to utilise a team approach to school matters. **(5)**

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

- * I establish a productive working relationship with parents in EC. *LOLSO Project (1997); Rodd (1998); Goldring & Rallis (1993); Fullan (1991).* **(30)**
- I provide pastoral care for EC teachers. *Grady et al. (1994); Fullan (1991.)* **(40)**
- I respect opinions of EC teachers. *Grady et al. (1994); Stoll & Fink (1996).* **(55)**
- I trust EC teachers' abilities to teach effectively. *Bishop & Mulford (1996); Grady et al. (1994); ASSR 1.1.2 (1998).* **(44)**
- (N) I attend to EC teachers' needs and concerns in a reliable manner. *Grady et al. (1994).* **(33)**
- I demonstrate effective conflict resolution skills. *Louis & Murphy (1994); Fullan (1991); SS 41 (1996).* **(11)**
- * I lead by 'doing' rather than by 'telling'. *Beck & Murphy (1993); Grady et al. (1994); SS 46 (1996).* **(43)**
- * (N) I demonstrate effective interpersonal skills. *Hill (1994); Rodd (1994); Grady et al. (1994).* **(24)**
- I lead EC teachers by my personal example. *Hill (1994); Regan (1995).* **(6)**
- * I command respect from EC teachers. *Stoll & Fink (1996).* **(20)**
- (N) I am easily accessible to EC teachers. *LOLSO Project (1997).* **(49)**
- I show sensitivity to EC teachers. *Grady et al. (1994); Ozga (1993).* **(10)**
- (N) I spend time talking to each EC teacher. *Hill (1994); Rodd (1994); Lashway et al. (1996); Fullan (1991); Hurty (1995).* **(35)**
- * I treat each EC teacher as an individual with unique needs and expertise. *Grady et al. (1994).* **(16)**
- * I consult with EC teachers when initiating actions, which will affect their work. *Mulford et al. (1996); Goldring & Rallis (1993).* **(25)**
- * I respond to EC teachers' personal concerns with consideration. **(4)**
- I regularly inquire from EC teachers about classroom activities. *Fullan (1991); LOLSO Project (1997).* **(13)**

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

- (N) I am able to assist EC teachers to improve their teaching practice. *Leithwood, Begley, et al. (1994); Rodd (1994).* **(48)**
- * I encourage all EC teachers to think about what they are doing for EC students. *Goldring & Rallis (1993); ASSR 1.4.2; ASSR 2.4.1(1998).* **(51)**
- (N) I encourage EC teachers to engage in professional activities. *Fullan (1991); SS 15 (1996).* **(23)**
- I possess a sound knowledge of what EC students need to learn. *Rodd (1994); Stamopoulos (1998); ASSR 1.4.1(1998).* **(8)**
- * I provide extended training to help develop EC teachers' knowledge and skills. *LOLSO Project (1997).* **(22)**
- * I provide information on current educational thought in ECE to EC teachers. *Stamopoulos (1998); ASSR 1.4.1 (1998).* **(2)**
- I seek feedback from EC teachers on school related matters. **(19)**
- I enhance EC teachers' professional growth by sharing leadership responsibility with them. *Blase & Blase (1997); Fullan (1991); Rodd (1994); ASSR 1.3.2 (1998).* **(21)**
- I encourage EC teachers to constantly strive for high performance in teaching. *Grady et al. (1994).* **(7)**
- * I demonstrate exemplary pedagogical skills in ECE *Rodd (1994) ; Leithwood, Begley, et al. (1994).* **(53)**
- * I respond with consideration to EC teachers' professional needs. **(14)**
- * I provide information that helps EC teachers to implement new programs. *Stamopoulos (1998).* **(27)**
- (N) I provide ongoing feedback on teaching performance to EC teachers. *SS 56 (1996).* **(52)**
- * I encourage EC teachers to take initiative in their work. *ASSR 1.4.3(1998).* **(56)**
- * (N) I am knowledgable about what goes on in EC classrooms. **(45)**

LEADERSHIP FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE

- * I frequently acknowledge EC teachers' performance in teaching. *Grady et al. (1994); ASSR 2.1.3(1998).* **(1)**

- * I pay EC teachers compliments for quality work. *Grady et al. (1994); Schmoker (1996).* **(46)**
- * I provide recognition for special work completed by EC teachers. *Grady et al. (1994).* **(31)**
- * I help EC teachers to get the necessary resources to help improve their teaching effectiveness. *Goldring & Rallis (1993); Rodd (1994); LOLSO Project (1997).* **(17)**
- I praise the efforts of EC students. *Grady et al. (1994).* **(41)**
- I display a belief in each EC teacher's ability to teach effectively. **(42)**
- I empower EC teachers to take on leadership roles. *Blase & Blase (1997); Fullan (1991); Rodd (1994); ASSR 1.3.2 (1998).* **(9)**
- I encourage high performance from all EC teachers. **(26)**
- I inform EC teachers of what high teaching performance means. **(18)**
- I find it hard to provide ongoing feedback on teaching performance to K-2 teachers. **(52)**

Key to Statement Items:

The number given in brackets, following each statement, indicates the number of the item within the surveys.

The content of statements preceded by * has been sourced from *Making Schools Smarter* (Leithwood & Aitken, 1995).

The contents of statements preceded by **(N)** are all stated negatively within the surveys.

APPENDIX 4

LEADERS' SURVEY FOR PILOT STUDY

SECTION 1 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Your assistance in answering the following questions would be most appreciated.
Please tick the appropriate box(es) for each question.

1a. What formal qualifications do you possess?

- ☐ No formal qualification
- ☐ Bachelor of Education
- ☐ Other (please specify)
- ☐ Tasmanian Teachers Certificate
- ☐ Master of Education

1b. What specialisation did you undertake in your training?

- ☐ Early Childhood Education
- ☐ Secondary Education
- ☐ Other (please specify)
- ☐ Primary Education
- ☐ Physical Education

1c. In what type of school are you currently teaching?

- ☐ Primary School
- ☐ District High School

1d. What is your leadership classification?

- ☐ Advanced Skills Teacher 2
- ☐ Assistant Principal
- ☐ Principal
- ☐ Advanced Skills Teacher 3
- ☐ Other (please specify)

1e. Please indicate your gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

SECTION 2 - LEADERSHIP ISSUES IN EDUCATION: KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 2

In this section, your general thoughts on the issue of leadership for education, in the first four years of schooling, are sought.

2a. Please rate, in order, what you believe are the *8* most important leadership factors, with respect to education in Kindergarten to Grade 2 year. In this scale, *1* should represent the most important factor through to *8*, representing the 8th most important leadership factor.

- ☐ Recognises K-2 teachers' performances
- ☐ Helps improve teaching practice in K-2
- ☐ Attends to K-2 teachers' personal needs
- ☐ Shares leadership with K-2 teachers
- ☐ Demonstrates a positive leadership presence in K-2
- ☐ Possesses sound conflict resolution and negotiation skills
- ☐ Demonstrates trust in, and support of, K-2 teachers
- ☐ Other aspect you believe is more important

.....

- ☐ Ensures adequate resource provision for K-2 programs (including professional development)
- ☐ Leads with energy and by example
- ☐ Promotes commitment to school goals and processes
- ☐ Values contributions of K-2 teachers equally.
- ☐ Encourages innovation (risk taking) by K-2 teachers
- ☐ Recognises achievement/involvement of K-2 students and parents

.....

2b. What do you believe are the greatest challenges for school leaders involved in leadership in K-2 today?

.....

.....

.....

.....

2c. Do you believe a lack of specific Early Childhood training limits the effectiveness of a school leader involved in a K-2 leadership role ? ☐ Yes - Why? ☐ No - Why not?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

SECTION 3 - PERSONAL LEADERSHIP ROLE: KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 2

This section concerns your personal leadership role in relation to education, in Kindergarten to Grade 2. Please respond by listing, or rating, key points to the following questions and statements.

3a. I believe my personal leadership strengths are:	**3b.I believe my personal leadership weaknesses are:**
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....

3c. At your school, what are the primary tasks you undertake in relation to providing quality leadership in Kindergarten to Grade 2, for teachers and students?	**3d. At your school, identify the three most influential leadership sources, (where *1* is *very strong, 2* is *considerable,* 3 is *moderate)* on the educational provision in Kindergarten to Grade 2.**
1.....	☐ The Principal
2.....	☐ Assistant Principal
3.....	☐ AST 3
4.....	☐ AST 2
5.....	☐ AST 1
6.....	☐ Team(s) of K-2 teachers
7.....	☐ Individual classroom teachers

Finally, your perceptions of your leadership role, in relation to education in the Early Years (K-2), are sought.

3e. Consider the nature of <u>your</u> leadership role in relation to education in Kindergarten to Grade 2. Please provide your perceptions, by marking <u>ONE</u> appropriate number with a circle, for each item. The scale is as follows:

1 *Strongly Agree* **2** *Agree* **3** *Disagree* **4** *Strongly Disagree*

1. I frequently acknowledge K-2 teachers' performances in teaching.	1	2	3	4
2. I provide information on current educational thought in early childhood education to K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
3. I don't encourage K-2 teachers to work towards school goals.	1	2	3	4
4. I respond to K-2 teachers' personal concerns with consideration.	1	2	3	4
5. I have a positive presence in the K-2 area of the school.	1	2	3	4
6. I lead K- 2 teachers by personal example.	1	2	3	4
7. I encourage K-2 teachers to constantly strive for high performance in teaching.	1	2	3	4
8. I possess a sound knowledge of what K-2 students need to learn.	1	2	3	4
9. I empower K- 2 teachers to take on leadership roles.	1	2	3	4
10. I show sensitivity to K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
11. I demonstrate effective conflict resolution skills within the school community.	1	2	3	4
12. I equally value contributions from all K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
13. I find it difficult to regularly inquire from K-2 teachers about activities in their classroom.	1	2	3	4
14. I respond with consideration to K-2 teachers' professional needs.	1	2	3	4
15. I encourage and support risk-taking by K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
16. I treat each K-2 teacher as an individual with unique needs and expertise.	1	2	3	4
17. I help K-2 teachers to get the necessary resources to help improve their teaching effectiveness.	1	2	3	4
18. I inform K-2 teachers of what high teaching performance means.	1	2	3	4
19. I seek feedback from K-2 teachers on school related matters.	1	2	3	4
20. I earn the respect of K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
21. I enhance K-2 teachers' professional growth by sharing leadership responsibility with them.	1	2	3	4
22. I provide extended training to help develop K-2 teachers' knowledge and skills.	1	2	3	4
23. I encourage K-2 teachers to engage in professional activities.	1	2	3	4
24. I demonstrate ineffective interpersonal skills.	1	2	3	4
25. I consult with K-2 teachers when initiating actions which will affect their work.	1	2	3	4
26. I encourage high performance from all K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
27. I regularly provide information that helps K-2 teachers to implement new programs.	1	2	3	4

28. I discourage contributions from all K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
29. I demonstrate shared decision-making processes with K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
30. I establish personal productive working relationships with parents in K-2 classes.	1	2	3	4
31. I provide recognition for special work completed by K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
32. I encourage K-2 teachers to regularly evaluate progress made towards goals for early childhood education.	1	2	3	4
33. I attend to K-2 teachers' needs and concerns in an unreliable manner.	1	2	3	4
34. I engender a sense of purpose in K-2 teachers' work.	1	2	3	4
35. I fail to allow time to talk regularly with each K-2 teacher.	1	2	3	4
36. I have the capacity to overcome most challenges arising in respect to early childhood.	1	2	3	4
37. Collaborative problem solving is part of my leadership style.	1	2	3	4
38. I demonstrate risk-taking in my leadership.	1	2	3	4
39. I demonstrate high energy levels in my leadership.	1	2	3	4
40. I provided pastoral care for K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
41. I regularly praise efforts of K-2 students.	1	2	3	4
42. I display a belief in each K-2 teachers' ability to teach effectively.	1	2	3	4
43. I lead K-2 teachers by telling rather than by doing.	1	2	3	4
44. I trust K-2 teachers to teach effectively.	1	2	3	4
45. I am not very knowledgeable about what happens in early childhood classrooms.	1	2	3	4
46. I pay K-2 teachers compliments for quality work.	1	2	3	4
47. I encourage innovation by, and consultation with, K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
48. I am unable to assist K-2 teachers to improve their teaching practices owing to a lack of personal technical knowledge.	1	2	3	4
49. I am not easily accessible to K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
50. I demonstrate an ability to compromise with K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
51. I encourage all K-2 teachers to think about what they are doing for students in their class.	1	2	3	4
52. I find it hard to provide on-going feedback on teaching performance to K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
53. I demonstrate excellent pedagogical skills in early childhood education.	1	2	3	4
54. I encourage K-2 teachers to feel and act like leaders in this school.	1	2	3	4
55. I respect opinions of K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
56. I encourage K-2 teachers to take initiative in their teaching.	1	2	3	4

Sincere thanks for taking the time to assist me with this study.

APPENDIX 5

TEACHERS' SURVEY FOR PILOT STUDY

SECTION 1 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Your assistance in answering the following questions would be most appreciated. Please tick the appropriate box(es) for each question.

1a. What formal qualifications do you possess?

- ☐ No formal qualification
- ☐ Tasmanian Teachers Certificate
- ☐ Bachelor of Education
- ☐ Master of Education
- ☐ Other (please specify)

1b. What specialisation did you undertake in your training?

- ☐ Early Childhood Education
- ☐ Primary Education
- ☐ Secondary Education
- ☐ Physical Education
- ☐ Other (please specify)

1c. In what type of school are you currently teaching?

- ☐ Primary School
- ☐ District High School

1e. Please indicate your gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

SECTION 2 - LEADERSHIP ISSUES IN EDUCATION: KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 2

In this section, your general thoughts on the issue of leadership for education, in the first four years of schooling, are sought.

2a. Please rate, in order, what you believe are the *8* most important leadership factors, with respect to education in Kindergarten to Grade 2 years. In this scale, *1* should represent the most important factor through to *8*, representing the 8th most important leadership factor.

- ☐ Recognises K-2 teachers' performances
- ☐ Helps improve teaching practice in K-2
- ☐ Attends to K-2 teachers' personal needs
- ☐ Shares leadership with K-2 teachers
- ☐ Demonstrates a positive leadership presence in K-2
- ☐ Possesses sound conflict resolution and negotiation skills
- ☐ Demonstrates trust in, and support of, K-2 teachers
- ☐ Other aspect/s you believe are more important (please specify) .....
  .....
- ☐ Ensures adequate resource provision for early childhood programs (including professional development opportunities for K-2 teachers)
- ☐ Promotes commitment to school goals and processes
- ☐ Values contributions of K-2 teachers equally.
- ☐ Encourages innovation (risk taking) by K-2 teachers
- ☐ Recognises achievement/involvement of K-2 students and parents
- ☐ Leads with energy and by example
  .....
  .....

2b. What do you believe are the greatest challenges for school leaders involved in leadership in K-2 today?

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2c. Do you believe a lack of specific Early Childhood training limits the effectiveness of a school leader involved in a K-2 leadership role ? Yes - Why? No - Why not?

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SECTION 3 - YOUR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S LEADERSHIP ROLE IN K-2 EDUCATION

Your assistance in answering the following questions, **about your *school principal* and his/her leadership role in Kindergarten to Grade 2**, would be most appreciated. Please tick the appropriate box or complete the following statements.

3a. Please indicate the gender of your school principal

☐ Male ☐ Female

3b. What specialisation did your school principal undertake in his/her training?

☐ Early Childhood Education ☐ Primary Education

☐ Secondary Education ☐ Physical Education

☐ Other (please specify) ☐ Not known

3c. At my present school: **I believe the principal's leadership strengths are:**	**3d. At my present school:** **I believe the principal's personal leadership weaknesses are:**
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3e. At your present school, what primary leadership tasks does the principal undertake in relation to education in Kindergarten to Grade 2?

1.....

2.....

3.....

4.....

3f. Consider the nature of the PRINCIPAL'S role in your school, in relation to education in Kindergarten to Grade 2. Please provide your perceptions, by marking ONE appropriate number with a circle, for each item. The scale is as follows:

1 *Strongly Agree* **2** *Agree* **3** *Disagree* **4** *Strongly Disagree*

1. Frequently acknowledges K-2 teachers' performances in teaching.	1	2	3	4
2. Provides information on current educational thought in early childhood education to K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
3. Has a positive presence in the K-2 area of the school.	1	2	3	4
4. Possesses a sound knowledge of what K-2 students need to learn.	1	2	3	4
5. Empowers K-2 teachers to take on leadership roles.	1	2	3	4
6. Equally values contributions from all K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
7. Demonstrates ineffective interpersonal skills.	1	2	3	4
8. Demonstrates shared decision-making processes with K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
9. Provides recognition for special work completed by K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
10. Encourages K-2 teachers to regularly evaluate progress made towards goals for early childhood education.	1	2	3	4
11. Provides pastoral care for K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
12. Trusts K-2 teachers to teach effectively.	1	2	3	4
13. Encourages innovation by, and consultation with, K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
14. Is unable to assist K-2 teachers to improve their teaching practices owing to the personal lack of technical knowledge.	1	2	3	4
15. Is not easily accessible to K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
16. Leads K-2 teachers by personal example.	1	2	3	4
17. Encourages K-2 teachers to feel and act like leaders in the school.	1	2	3	4

3g. At your school, identify the three most influential leadership sources, (where *1* is *very strong, 2* is *considerable,* 3 is *moderate)* on the educational provision in Kindergarten to Grade 2.

- ☐ The Principal
- ☐ Assistant Principal
- ☐ AST 3
- ☐ AST 2
- ☐ AST 1
- ☐ Teams of K-2 teachers
- ☐ Individual classroom teachers

SECTION 4 -
OTHER FORMS OF LEADERSHIP PROVIDED IN K- 2 AT YOUR SCHOOL

I would appreciate your perceptions on the issues, related to leadership provided by other senior staff and/or teachers **(other than the principal),** for teachers and students involved in the Kindergarten to Grade 2 area of your school.

4a. What level(s) of senior staff member(s) do you have in your school who is/are responsible for education in K-2? Tick more than one box if applicable.

- ☐ Advanced Skills Teacher 1
- ☐ Advanced Skills Teacher 2
- ☐ Advanced Skills Teacher 3
- ☐ Assistant Principal
- ☐ Other (please specify)

4b. Please indicate which level of responsibility is held by the person (other than the principal), with whom you have most contact regarding leadership issues, problems and/or decisions arising in K-2?

- ☐ Advanced Skills Teacher 1
- ☐ Advanced Skills Teacher 2
- ☐ Advanced Skills Teacher 3
- ☐ Assistant Principal
- ☐ Classroom teacher
- ☐ Other (please specify)

4c. Please indicate the gender of this staff member.

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

4d. What specialisation did this staff member undertake in his/her training?

- ☐ Early Childhood Education
- ☐ Primary Education
- ☐ Secondary Education
- ☐ Physical Education
- ☐ Other (please specify)
- ☐ Not known

4e. Why do you turn to this staff member for leadership and/or support in K-2 matters?

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4f. What do you believe this staff member's leadership strengths are:	**4g. What do you believe this staff member's leadership weaknesses are:**
1.....	1.....
2.....	2.....
3.....	3.....
4.....	4.....
5.....	5.....
6.....	6.....
7.....	7.....

4h. Consider the nature of this staff member's leadership role in your school, in relation to education in Kindergarten to Grade 2. Please provide your perceptions, by marking ONE appropriate number with a circle, for each item.

The scale is as follows:

1 *Strongly Agree* **2** *Agree* **3** *Disagree* **4** *Strongly Disagree*

1. Frequently acknowledges K-2 teachers' performances in teaching.	1	2	3	4
2. Provides information on current educational thought in early childhood education to K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
3. Doesn't encourage K-2 teachers to work towards school goals.	1	2	3	4
4. Responds to K-2 teachers' personal concerns with consideration.	1	2	3	4
5. Has a positive presence in the K-2 area of the school.	1	2	3	4
6. Leads K-2 teachers by personal example.	1	2	3	4
7. Encourages K-2 teachers to constantly strive for high performance in teaching.	1	2	3	4
8. Possesses a sound knowledge of what K-2 students need to learn.	1	2	3	4
9. Empowers K-2 teachers to take on leadership roles.	1	2	3	4
10. Shows sensitivity to K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
11. Demonstrates effective conflict resolution skills within the school community.	1	2	3	4
12. Equally values contributions from all K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
13. Regularly enquires from K-2 teachers about activities in their classrooms.	1	2	3	4
14. Responds with consideration to K-2 teachers' professional needs.	1	2	3	4
15. Encourages and supports risk-taking by K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
16. Treats each K-2 teacher as an individual with unique needs and expertise.	1	2	3	4

17. Helps K-2 teachers to get the necessary resources to help improve their teaching effectiveness.	1	2	3	4
18. Informs K-2 teachers of what high teaching performance means.	1	2	3	4
19. Seeks feedback from K-2 teachers on school related matters.	1	2	3	4
20. Earns the respect of K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
21. Enhances K-2 teachers' professional growth by sharing leadership responsibility with them.	1	2	3	4
22. Provides extended training to help develop K-2 teachers' knowledge and skills.	1	2	3	4
23. Encourages K-2 teachers to engage in professional activities, related to their area of teaching.	1	2	3	4
24. Demonstrates ineffective interpersonal skills.	1	2	3	4
25. Consults with K-2 teachers when initiating actions which will affect their work.	1	2	3	4
26. Encourages high performance from all K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
27. Regularly provides information that helps K-2 teachers to implement new programs.	1	2	3	4
28. Discourages contributions from all K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
29. Demonstrates shared decision-making processes with K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
30. Establishes productive, personal working relationships with parents in K-2 classes.	1	2	3	4
31. Provides recognition for special work completed by K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
32. Encourages K-2 teachers to regularly evaluate progress made towards goals for K-2 education.	1	2	3	4
33. Attends to K-2 teachers' needs and concerns in an unreliable manner.	1	2	3	4
34. Engenders a sense of purpose in K-2 teachers' work.	1	2	3	4
35. Fails to allow time to regularly talk with K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
36. Has the capacity to overcome most challenges arising in respect to early childhood.	1	2	3	4
37. Collaborative problem solving is part of his/her leadership style.	1	2	3	4
38. Demonstrates risk-taking in his/her leadership.	1	2	3	4
39. Demonstrates high energy levels in his/her leadership.	1	2	3	4
40. Provides pastoral care for K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
41. Regularly praises efforts of K-2 students.	1	2	3	4
42. Displays a belief in each K-2 teachers' ability to teach effectively.	1	2	3	4
43. Leads K-2 teachers by telling rather than by doing.	1	2	3	4
44. Trusts K-2 teachers to teach effectively.	1	2	3	4
45. Is not very knowledgeable about what happens in K-2 classrooms.	1	2	3	4
46. Pays compliments to K-2 teachers' for quality work.	1	2	3	4
47. Encourages innovation by, and consultation with, K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
48. Is unable to assist K-2 teachers to improve their teaching practices owing to the personal lack of technical knowledge.	1	2	3	4

49. Is not easily accessible to K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
50. Demonstrates an ability to compromise with K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
51. Encourages all K-2 teachers to think about what they are doing for students in their classes.	1	2	3	4
52. Appears to find it hard to provide on-going feedback on teaching performance to K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
53. Demonstrates excellent pedagogical skills in K-2 education.	1	2	3	4
54. Encourages K-2 teachers to feel and act like leaders in the school.	1	2	3	4
55. Respects opinions of K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
56. Encourages K-2 teachers to take initiative in their teaching.	1	2	3	4

Sincere thanks for taking the time to assist me with this study.

APPENDIX 6

LEADERS' AND TEACHERS' FEEDBACK LETTER

FOR PILOT STUDY

YOUR FEEDBACK ON THE PROPOSED SURVEY FOR THE RESEARCH STUDY:

"Leadership in Early Childhood Education in Tasmania"

Sincere thanks for agreeing to be part of the pilot study for my research, as part of completing my Educational Doctorate. As mentioned in the accompanying letter, I do appreciate you taking the time to assist with the study. Your contribution will assist me to make modifications to the surveys which hopefully will make them more user-friendly and pertinent to teachers and school leaders.

I would welcome your thoughts on how you believe this survey for the study could be improved. Please feel free to write comments, or questions on the survey itself as you complete it, or answer on the following page. Please place your completed survey in the provided envelope and I will come and collect them all next Thursday.

Sincere thanks for your assistance.

Margot Boardman

APPENDIX 7

LEADERS' AND TEACHERS' FEEDBACK SHEET

FOR PILOT STUDY

YOUR FEEDBACK ON THE PROPOSED SURVEY FOR THE RESEARCH STUDY:

"Leadership in Early Childhood Education in Tasmania"

1. **I believe the questions could be improved by:**

2. **More emphasis needs to be placed on the following aspects of leadership in Early Childhood in the survey:**

3. **I didn't understand:**

4. **The instructions could have been improved in regard to:**

5. **Anything else you believe might be helpful:**

6. **Time taken to complete the survey:**

APPENDIX 8

LEADERS' SURVEY FOR THE STUDY

SECTION 1 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Your assistance in answering the following questions would be most appreciated. Please tick the appropriate box(es) for each question.

1a. What formal qualifications do you possess?

- ☐ No formal qualification
- ☐ Tasmanian Teachers Certificate
- ☐ Two Year Trained Teacher
- ☐ Three Year Trained Teacher
- ☐ Bachelor of Education
- ☐ Master of Education
- ☐ Other (please specify) .....

1b. What specialisation did you undertake in your training?

- ☐ Early Childhood Education
- ☐ Primary Education
- ☐ Secondary Education
- ☐ Physical Education
- ☐ Other (please specify) .....

1c. In what type of school are you currently teaching?

- ☐ Primary School
- ☐ District High School

1d. What is your leadership classification?

- ☐ Advanced Skills Teacher 2
- ☐ Advanced Skills Teacher 3
- ☐ Assistant Principal
- ☐ Other (please specify) .....
- ☐ Principal

1e. Please indicate your gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

SECTION 2 - LEADERSHIP ISSUES IN EDUCATION: KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 2

In this section, your general thoughts on the issue of leadership for education, in the first four years of schooling, are sought.

2a. Please rate, in order, what you believe are the *5* most important leadership factors, with respect to education in Kindergarten to Grade 2 years. In this scale, *1* should represent the most important factor through to *5*, representing the 5th most important leadership factor.

- ☐ Recognises K-2 teachers' performances
- ☐ Helps improve teaching practice in K-2
- ☐ Attends to K-2 teachers' personal needs
- ☐ Shares leadership with K-2 teachers
- ☐ Demonstrates a positive leadership presence in K-2
- ☐ Possesses sound conflict resolution and negotiation skills
- ☐ Demonstrates trust in, and support of, K-2 teachers
- ☐ Other aspect you believe is more important .....
- ☐ Ensures adequate resource provision for K-2 programs (including professional development)
- ☐ Leads with energy and by example
- ☐ Promotes commitment to school goals and processes
- ☐ Values contributions of K-2 teachers equally.
- ☐ Encourages innovation (risk taking) by K-2 teachers
- ☐ Recognises achievement/involvement of K-2 students and parents

2b. What do you believe are the greatest challenges for school leaders involved in leadership in K-2 today?

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2c. Do you believe a lack of specific Early Childhood training limits the effectiveness of a school leader involved in a K-2 leadership role ? ☐ Yes - Why? ☐ No - Why not?

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SECTION 3 - PERSONAL LEADERSHIP ROLE: KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 2

This section concerns your personal leadership role in relation to education, in Kindergarten to Grade 2. Please respond by listing, or rating, key points to the following questions and statements.

3a. I believe my personal leadership strengths are:	**3b. I believe my personal leadership skills could be improved in relation to:**
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
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.....	.....

3c. At your school, what are the primary tasks you undertake in relation to providing quality leadership for teachers in Kindergarten to Grade 2?	**3d. At your school, identify the three most influential sources of leadership on the educational provision in Kindergarten to Grade 2 (where *1* is *very strong*, *2* is *considerable*, 3 is *moderate*).**
1.....	☐ The Principal
2.....	☐ Assistant Principal
3	☐ AST 3
4	☐ AST 2
5	☐ AST 1
6	☐ Team(s) of K-2 teachers
7.....	☐ Individual classroom teachers

Finally, your perceptions of your leadership role, in relation to education in the Early Years (K-2), are sought.

3e. Consider the nature of <u>your</u> leadership role in relation to education in Kindergarten to Grade 2. Please provide your perceptions, by marking <u>ONE</u> appropriate number with a circle, for each item. The scale is as follows:

1 *Strongly Agree* **2** *Agree* **3** *Disagree* **4** *Strongly Disagree*

1. I frequently acknowledge K-2 teachers' achievements in teaching.	1	2	3	4
2. I provide information on current educational thought in early childhood education to K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
3. I don't encourage K-2 teachers to work towards school goals.	1	2	3	4
4. I respond to K-2 teachers' personal concerns with consideration.	1	2	3	4
5. I facilitate opportunities for K-2 teachers to utilise a team approach to school matters.	1	2	3	4
6. I lead K- 2 teachers by personal example.	1	2	3	4
7. I constantly encourage K-2 teachers to strive for high performance in teaching.	1	2	3	4
8. I possess a sound knowledge of what K-2 students need to learn.	1	2	3	4
9. I empower K- 2 teachers to take on leadership roles.	1	2	3	4
10. I show sensitivity to K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
11. I demonstrate effective conflict resolution skills within the school community.	1	2	3	4
12. I equally value contributions from all K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
13. I find it difficult to regularly discuss classroom activities with K-2 teachers,.	1	2	3	4
14. I actively go out of my way to support K-2 teachers' professional development needs.	1	2	3	4
15. I encourage and support risk-taking by K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
16. I treat each K-2 teacher as an individual with unique needs and expertise.	1	2	3	4
17. I help K-2 teachers to get the necessary resources to help improve their teaching effectiveness.	1	2	3	4
18. I inform K-2 teachers of what high teaching performance means.	1	2	3	4
19. I seek feedback from K-2 teachers on school related matters.	1	2	3	4
20. I earn the respect of K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
21. I enhance K-2 teachers' professional growth by sharing leadership responsibility with them.	1	2	3	4
22. I provide extended training to help develop K-2 teachers' knowledge and skills.	1	2	3	4
23. I facilitate the training of K-2 teachers in working and learning in teams.	1	2	3	4
24. I demonstrate effective interpersonal skills.	1	2	3	4
25. I consult with K-2 teachers when initiating actions that will affect their work.	1	2	3	4
26. I encourage high performance from all K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4

27. I regularly provide information that helps K-2 teachers to implement new programs.	1	2	3	4
28. I discourage contributions from all K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
29. I demonstrate shared decision-making processes with K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
30. I establish personal productive working relationships with parents in K-2 classes.	1	2	3	4
31. I provide recognition for special work completed by K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
32. I encourage K-2 teachers to regularly evaluate progress made towards goals for early childhood education.	1	2	3	4
33. I attend to K-2 teachers' needs and concerns in a reliable manner.	1	2	3	4
34. I engender a sense of purpose in K-2 teachers' work.	1	2	3	4
35. I fail to allow time to talk regularly with each K-2 teacher.	1	2	3	4
36. I have the capacity to overcome most challenges arising in respect to early childhood.	1	2	3	4
37. Collaborative problem solving is part of my leadership style.	1	2	3	4
38. I demonstrate risk-taking in my leadership.	1	2	3	4
39. I demonstrate high energy levels in my leadership.	1	2	3	4
40. I provide pastoral care for K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
41. I regularly praise efforts of K-2 students.	1	2	3	4
42. I display a belief in each K-2 teachers' ability to teach effectively.	1	2	3	4
43. I lead K-2 teachers by telling rather than by doing.	1	2	3	4
44. I trust K-2 teachers to teach effectively.	1	2	3	4
45. I am not very knowledgeable about what happens in early childhood classrooms.	1	2	3	4
46. I pay K-2 teachers compliments for quality work.	1	2	3	4
47. I encourage innovation by, and consultation with, K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
48. I am unable to assist K-2 teachers to improve their teaching practices owing to a lack of personal technical knowledge.	1	2	3	4
49. I am not easily accessible to K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
50. I demonstrate an ability to compromise with K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
51. I encourage all K-2 teachers to think about what they are doing for students in their class.	1	2	3	4
52. I find it hard to provide on-going feedback on teaching performance to K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
53. I demonstrate excellent pedagogical skills in early childhood education.	1	2	3	4
54. I encourage K-2 teachers to feel and act like leaders in this school.	1	2	3	4
55. I respect opinions of K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
56. I encourage K-2 teachers to work alone in their teaching.	1	2	3	4

Sincere thanks for taking the time to assist me with this study.

APPENDIX 9

TEACHERS' SURVEY FOR THE STUDY

SECTION 1 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Your assistance in answering the following questions would be most appreciated. Please tick the appropriate box(es) for each question.

1a. What formal qualifications do you possess?

- ☐ No formal qualification
- ☐ Bachelor of Education
- ☐ Master of Education
- ☐ Tasmanian Teachers Certificate
- ☐ Other (please specify) .....

1b. What specialisation did you undertake in your training?

- ☐ Early Childhood Education
- ☐ Primary Education
- ☐ Secondary Education
- ☐ Physical Education
- ☐ Other (please specify).....

1c. In what type of school are you currently teaching?

- ☐ Primary School
- ☐ District High School

1d. Please indicate your gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

SECTION 2 - LEADERSHIP ISSUES IN EDUCATION: KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 2

In this section, your general thoughts on the issue of leadership for education, in the first four years of schooling, are sought.

2a. Please rate, in order, what you believe are the *5* most important leadership factors, with respect to education in Kindergarten to Grade 2 years. In this scale, *1* should represent the most important factor through to *5*, representing the 5th most important leadership factor.

- ☐ Recognises K-2 teachers' performances
- ☐ Helps improve teaching practice in K-2
- ☐ Attends to K-2 teachers' personal needs
- ☐ Shares leadership with K-2 teachers
- ☐ Demonstrates a positive leadership presence in K-2
- ☐ Possesses sound conflict resolution and negotiation skills
- ☐ Demonstrates trust in, and support of, K-2 teachers
- ☐ Other aspect you believe is more important .....
- ☐ Ensures adequate resource provision for K-2 programs (including professional development)
- ☐ Leads with energy and by example
- ☐ Promotes commitment to school goals and processes
- ☐ Values contributions of K-2 teachers equally.
- ☐ Encourages innovation (risk taking) by K-2 teachers
- ☐ Recognises achievement/involvement of K-2 students and parents

2b. What do you believe are the greatest challenges for school leaders involved in leadership in K-2 today?

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.....

.....

.....

2c. Do you believe a lack of specific Early Childhood training limits the effectiveness of a school leader involved in a K-2 leadership role? ☐ Yes - Why? ☐ No - Why not?

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SECTION 3 - YOUR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S LEADERSHIP ROLE IN K-2 EDUCATION

Your assistance in answering the following questions, **about your *school principal* and his/her leadership role in Kindergarten to Grade 2**, would be most appreciated. Please tick the appropriate box or complete the following statements.

3a. Please indicate the gender of your school principal

☐ Male ☐ Female

3b. What specialisation did your school principal undertake in his/her training?

☐ Early Childhood Education ☐ Primary Education

☐ Secondary Education ☐ Physical Education

☐ Other (please specify) ☐ Not known

3c. At my present school: I believe the principal's leadership strengths are:	**3d. At my present school: I believe the principal's personal leadership skills could be improved in relation to:**
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....

3e. At your present school, what primary leadership tasks does the principal undertake in relation to education in Kindergarten to Grade 2?

1.....

2.....

3.....

4.....

5.....

3f. Consider the nature of the PRINCIPAL'S role in your school, in relation to education in Kindergarten to Grade 2. Please provide your perceptions, by marking ONE appropriate number with a circle, for each item. The scale is as follows:

1	2	3	4
Strongly Agree	*Agree*	*Disagree*	*Strongly Disagree*

1. Frequently acknowledges K-2 teachers' performances in teaching.	1	2	3	4
2. Provides information on current educational thought in early childhood education to K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
3. Has a positive presence in the K-2 area of the school.	1	2	3	4
4. Possesses a sound knowledge of what K-2 students need to learn.	1	2	3	4
5. Empowers K-2 teachers to take on leadership roles.	1	2	3	4
6. Equally values contributions from all K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
7. Demonstrates ineffective interpersonal skills.	1	2	3	4
8. Demonstrates shared decision-making processes with K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
9. Provides recognition for special work completed by K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
10. Encourages K-2 teachers to regularly evaluate progress made towards goals for early childhood education.	1	2	3	4
11. Provides pastoral care for K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
12. Trusts K-2 teachers to teach effectively.	1	2	3	4
13. Encourages innovation by, and consultation with, K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
14. Is unable to assist K-2 teachers to improve their teaching practices owing to the personal lack of technical knowledge.	1	2	3	4
15. Is not easily accessible to K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
16. Leads K-2 teachers by personal example.	1	2	3	4
17. Encourages K-2 teachers to feel and act like leaders in the school.	1	2	3	4

3g. At your school, identify the three most influential sources of leadership for the educational provision in Kindergarten to Grade 2, (where *1* is *very strong, 2* is *considerable,* 3 is *moderate).*

- ☐ The Principal
- ☐ Assistant Principal
- ☐ AST 3
- ☐ AST 2
- ☐ AST 1
- ☐ Teams of K-2 teachers
- ☐ Individual classroom teachers

SECTION 4 -
OTHER FORMS OF LEADERSHIP PROVIDED IN K- 2 AT YOUR SCHOOL

I would appreciate your perceptions on the issues, related to leadership provided by other senior staff and/or teachers **(other than the principal),** for teachers and students involved in the Kindergarten to Grade 2 area of your school.

4a. What level(s) of senior staff member(s) do you have in your school who is/are responsible for education in K-2? Tick more than one box if applicable.

- ☐ Advanced Skills Teacher 1
- ☐ Advanced Skills Teacher 2
- ☐ Advanced Skills Teacher 3
- ☐ Assistant Principal
- ☐ Other (please specify)

4b. Please indicate which level of responsibility is held by the person (other than the principal), with whom you have most contact regarding leadership issues, problems and/or decisions arising in K-2?

- ☐ Advanced Skills Teacher 1
- ☐ Advanced Skills Teacher 2
- ☐ Advanced Skills Teacher 3
- ☐ Assistant Principal
- ☐ Classroom teacher
- ☐ Other (please specify)

4c. Please indicate the gender of this staff member.

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

4d. What specialisation did this staff member undertake in his/her training?

- ☐ Early Childhood Education
- ☐ Primary Education
- ☐ Secondary Education
- ☐ Physical Education
- ☐ Other (please specify)
- ☐ Not known

4e. Why do you turn to this staff member for leadership and/or support in K-2 matters?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

4f. What do you believe this staff member's leadership strengths are?	**4g. In what areas do you believe this staff member's leadership skills could be improved?**
1.....	1.....
2.....	2.....
3.....	3.....
4.....	4.....
5.....	5.....
6.....	6.....
7.....	7.....

4h. Consider the nature of this staff member's leadership role in your school, in relation to education in Kindergarten to Grade 2. Please provide your perceptions, by marking <u>ONE</u> appropriate number with a circle, for each item. The scale is as follows:

1 *Strongly Agree* **2** *Agree* **3** *Disagree* **4** *Strongly Disagree*

1. Frequently acknowledges K-2 teachers' achievements in teaching.	1	2	3	4
2. Provides information on current educational thought in early childhood education to K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
3. Doesn't encourage K-2 teachers to work towards school goals.	1	2	3	4
4. Responds to K-2 teachers' personal concerns with consideration.	1	2	3	4
5. Facilitates opportunities for K-2 teachers to utilise a team approach to school matters.	1	2	3	4
6. Leads K-2 teachers by personal example.	1	2	3	4
7. Constantly encourages K-2 teachers to strive for high performance in teaching.	1	2	3	4
8. Possesses a sound knowledge of what K-2 students need to learn.	1	2	3	4
9. Empowers K-2 teachers to take on leadership roles.	1	2	3	4

10. Shows sensitivity to K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
11. Demonstrates effective conflict resolution skills within the school community.	1	2	3	4
12. Equally values contributions from all K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
13. Regularly discusses activities in their classrooms with K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
14. Actively supports K-2 teachers' professional developmental needs.	1	2	3	4
15. Encourages and supports risk-taking by K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
16. Treats each K-2 teacher as an individual with unique needs and expertise.	1	2	3	4
17. Helps K-2 teachers to get the necessary resources to help improve their teaching effectiveness.	1	2	3	4
18. Informs K-2 teachers of what high teaching performance means.	1	2	3	4
19. Seeks feedback from K-2 teachers on school related matters.	1	2	3	4
20. Earns the respect of K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
21. Enhances K-2 teachers' professional growth by sharing leadership responsibility with them.	1	2	3	4
22. Provides extended training to help develop K-2 teachers' knowledge and skills.	1	2	3	4
23. Facilitates the training of K-2 teachers in working and learning in teams.	1	2	3	4
24. Demonstrates effective interpersonal skills.	1	2	3	4
25. Consults with K-2 teachers when initiating actions which will affect their work.	1	2	3	4
26. Encourages high performance from all K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
27. Regularly provides information that helps K-2 teachers to implement new programs.	1	2	3	4
28. Discourages contributions from all K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
29. Demonstrates shared decision-making processes with K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
30. Establishes productive, personal working relationships with parents in K-2 classes.	1	2	3	4
31. Provides recognition for special work completed by K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
32. Encourages K-2 teachers to regularly evaluate progress made towards goals for K-2 education.	1	2	3	4
33. Attends to K-2 teachers' needs and concerns in a reliable manner.	1	2	3	4
34. Engenders a sense of purpose in K-2 teachers' work.	1	2	3	4
35. Fails to allow time to regularly talk with K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
36. Has the capacity to overcome most challenges arising in respect to early childhood.	1	2	3	4
37. Collaborative problem solving is part of his/her leadership style.	1	2	3	4
38. Demonstrates risk-taking in his/her leadership.	1	2	3	4
39. Demonstrates high energy levels in his/her leadership.	1	2	3	4
40. Provides pastoral care for K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
41. Regularly praises efforts of K-2 students.	1	2	3	4
42. Displays a belief in each K-2 teachers' ability to teach effectively.	1	2	3	4

43. Leads K-2 teachers by telling rather than by doing.	1	2	3	4
44. Trusts K-2 teachers to teach effectively.	1	2	3	4
45. Is not very knowledgeable about what happens in K-2 classrooms.	1	2	3	4
46. Pays compliments to K-2 teachers' for quality work.	1	2	3	4
47. Encourages innovation by, and consultation with, K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
48. Is unable to assist K-2 teachers to improve their teaching practices owing to the personal lack of technical knowledge.	1	2	3	4
49. Is not easily accessible to K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
50. Demonstrates an ability to compromise with K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
51. Encourages all K-2 teachers to think about what they are doing for students in their classes.	1	2	3	4
52. Appears to find it hard to provide on-going feedback on teaching performance to K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
53. Demonstrates excellent pedagogical skills in K-2 education.	1	2	3	4
54. Encourages K-2 teachers to feel and act like leaders in the school.	1	2	3	4
55. Respects opinions of K-2 teachers.	1	2	3	4
56. Encourages K-2 teachers to work alone in their teaching.	1	2	3	4

Sincere thanks for taking the time to assist me with this study.

APPENDIX 10

LETTER TO DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS

REGARDING THE PROPOSED STUDY

UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

Department of Early Childhood/Primary Education

17 September 1999

Dear ,

Over the next year, I will be aiming to satisfy the requirements for the successful completion of my Educational Doctorate. This process entails undertaking a research study. My study, under the supervision of Professor Bill Mulford, is aimed at providing a comprehensive view of the nature of the leadership provision in the first four years of schooling (Kinder – Grade 2). The perceptions of relevant teachers, senior staff members and school principals will be sought through the use of surveys, regarding the leadership provision at their current school.

To gain a representative sample of Tasmanian schools, I have chosen the two school districts of ..... and ..... for my study. The study has received approval from the Ethics Committee at the University, and at present is awaiting from the DETCCD, to enable the data gathering process to commence. Once the second approval is gained, I would appreciate your support to ensure the success of the study.

During early August, I spoke to ..... about my study and he/she provided me with information regarding the processes involved in accessing school data in ..... District (eg. student enrolments and senior staffing entitlements). I was most appreciative of the assistance given.

I will keep you informed of the progress of my study. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding the research. I have attached a list of the schools selected for the survey process. I will be seeking each principal's agreement to conduct the study in his/her school after gaining the necessary approval.

Yours sincerely

Margot Boardman
Lecturer in Early Childhood

PO Box 1214 Launceston
Tasmania 7250 Australia
Telephone 03 6324 3725
Facsimile 03 6324 3048

APPENDIX 11

INFORMATION SHEET FOR SCHOOLS

REGARDING THE STUDY

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY

WHAT IS THE TITLE OF THE STUDY?
"Educational Leadership in Kindergarten to Grade 2 in Tasmanian Schools"

WHY WAS THIS TOPIC CHOSEN?
- *Little research completed on this in Australia, or overseas. What has been completed relates to Child Care settings.*
- *Huge changes have occurred in Tasmanian K-2 education over the past decade, which have caused considered changes in leadership also.*
- *This survey has strong links to ASSR data gathered in schools.*
- *It is towards completing my Educational Doctorate.*

WHAT METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION IS BEING USED?
- *2 surveys – one for school leaders who work with K-2 teachers and the second for K-2 teachers including Flying Start teachers.*

WHAT SCHOOLS ARE INVOLVED?
- *30 schools in Forester and Macquarie Districts – covering small to large schools and schools from high to low Economic Needs Index.*

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED APPROVAL?
- ***Approval has been received from DETCCD and Ethics at the University.***

WHY SHOULD I TAKE PART?
- *Only those teachers in schools know what is actually occurring.*
- *We should share our Tasmanian expertise with other Australian states.*
- *To inform Tasmanian officials what needs to change re K-2 leadership.*

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO COMPLETE?
- *20 minutes for school leaders*
- *30 minutes for teachers*

DO I NEED TO ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS?
- *I ask that you do – but I leave it to your discretion.*
- *Record in point form.*
- *Remember only your first thoughts are needed.*

IF I HAVE PROBLEMS – WHAT DO I DO?
- *Phone me*
- *Ethics issues can be discussed with Chris Hooper.*

WHEN I HAVE FINISHED IT WHAT DO I DO?
- *Please place in the Reply Paid envelope and post to me.*
- *I'll send a follow up letter in a 2 weeks to remind everyone, so please ignore this if you have already completed it.*

WILL I HEAR ANY RESULTS ABOUT THIS STUDY?

- *Yes!! Next year I will invite all participants to sessions to share and discuss the findings.*

WHAT HAPPENS TO MY SURVEY?

- ***All survey s are numbered to keep track of school types/sizes – for validity of data received.***
- ***The number will be cut off when received prior to data analysis.***

WILL ANYONE KNOW THAT I COMPLETED THIS SURVEY?

- *No. All responses are confidential and no reference will be able to be made to any school or leader or teacher.*

Sincere thanks for agreeing to participate and I await the receipt of your survey.

Margot

APPENDIX 12

REMINDER LETTER FOR SCHOOLS

REGARDING THE STUDY

UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA
Department of Early Childhood/Primary Education

8 November 1998

Dear

Thank you for your recent interest in, and support of, my research study, Educational Leadership in the Early Years (K-2). I indicated to you, when I delivered the surveys associated with the study, that I would contact you again, in follow up.

Could you please pass on to your staff my sincere thanks to those who have already completed and returned the survey.

As the validity of the findings from any survey is enhanced by an increased number of responses, I would appreciate it if you could, on my behalf, remind your staff of the survey and request an early return of completed forms from any who have not yet done so.

I reiterate that response to the survey is entirely voluntary, but I would appreciate receipt of the maximum possible number of responses to lend validity to my research study findings. Please reassure your staff that all responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality, as I have earlier indicated.

Your support in this matter is sincerely appreciated.

With thanks,

Margot Boardman
Lecturer in Early Childhood

PO Box 1214 Launceston
Tasmania 7250 Australia
Telephone 03 6324 3725
Facsimile 03 6324 3048

APPENDIX 13

INFORMAL GREETING NOTE FOR SCHOOLS

REGARDING THE STUDY

GREETINGS FROM MARGOT

I know it's a busy time of the year, and getting busier!

Could you please pass on my sincere thanks to your K-2 teachers for any survey responses already returned.

To ensure consideration of the broadest data base possible for my study, I would really appreciate any teachers who may still be considering completing the survey doing so and returning them within the next week or so.

Could you please pass this on for me? Thank you for your support.

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